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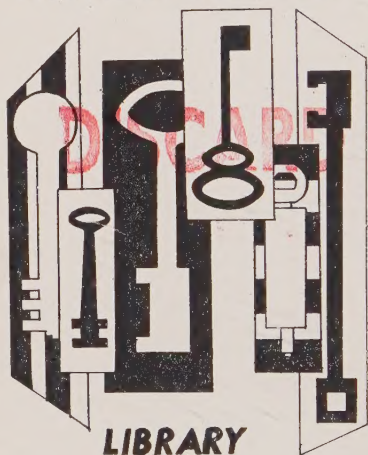
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FLORENCE

COLUMBIA, MO.



THE DUOMO (BRUNELLESCHI) AND CAMPANILE (GIOTTO)

FLORENCE

BY
CAMILLE MAUCLAIR

TRANSLATED BY
CICELY BINYON

WITH 48 ILLUSTRATIONS



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PREFACE

IT was not without emotion that I undertook to write this book. The task set me was so formidable that the fear of failure far exceeded my pleasure in making the attempt: now the book is finished, the fear is all that is left me. So many books have been dedicated to Florence; and yet how many things remain to be said! And I had to set myself strict limits in dealing with a subject which seems to grow deeper the more we try to fathom it, like those pure and marvellous springs of seemingly bottomless water where the plummet we let down never reaches a resting-place. Were these pages twenty times as many they would be too few to express all that such a city suggests, with its history, its monuments, its artists, its thinkers, its soul, and its genius. I longed to say it all: the choice of what to leave unsaid was a cruel one. I beg the reader to forgive me if I attempt here a short justification not of the faults, but of the limitations of my book.

Faced with the greatness of my subject I could only choose that part of it which appeals to a poet. I have let my heart speak. I recalled the day when I first saw Florence. That first meeting was like the first meeting with the person for whom one is fated to feel a great, an intense love. To me Florence is not a city, but a beloved

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being ; I think of her as a person. And I have tried to paint her portrait here with the unskilful but earnest longing of a lover who knows that since he has no genius, he cannot hope to make visible to the world the beauty of the woman he loves ; but still he makes the trial, since in trying he is in her presence, may gaze at her, breathe in her beauty. And the pencil falls from his hand ; but he is there, he lingers, in the joy of her dear presence.

You will judge the portrait to be a poor one. I desire only that it may make Florence loved a little more, and that you may feel, as you read my words, the radiance of her beauty. If I could know that even one of my readers, not having already seen her, should, after reading this book, determine to set out for Tuscany, were it only to convince himself of my unworthiness for my task, I would feel satisfied. To complete my portrait I was obliged to make a brief summary of her political, literary, and artistic history ; a wild scheme, no doubt, to compress in these chapters the life and work of so many tribunes, princes, poets, and fresco-painters, the heroes of the written word, of colour, of bronze, of the sword ! May Dante, Savonarola, Giotto, Cosimo, Lorenzo, Leonardo, the Blessed John of Fiesole, and Michelangelo deign to pardon me ! I am no Cellini to engrave "the Combat of the Titans on the hilt of a dagger." Yet this is what is required ; for each of these acts, each of these marvellous beings is a verse in that vast poem which we call

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Florence. But when I had paid this tribute to the form and clearness of a book which, after all, must contain within its fixed limits the essential things it has gained from many large folios, I left my study table and went out into the streets, since Florence is no city of the Past, no glorious moment that is dead. She is eternal beauty, she lives, magnificent in her femininity. Not only must our minds apprehend her, our hearts must be stirred ; we must desire her, love her. In no other place in the world have I felt so intensely that the essential quality in criticism is the quality of loving.

Let those who read this book, when they have glanced through the first chapters, come with me to taste her beauties. I am no historian to discuss problems, no art critic to teach you. I speak as a poet, haunted by a lovely dream, who would lead you forth and invite you to share his enthusiasm or his silence, for there are places and times where we need to be silent if we are to understand. Do you ask for lessons ? There are learned and massive volumes enough for that. My little book only offers you thoughts and feelings. You will read at once almost all you need to know. My wish was to foretell what your soul may experience.

Let us imagine ourselves, one lovely evening, full of lingering Tuscan charm, leaning out of the Belvedere of the Boboli Gardens. Florence lies before us, far enough away for us to see her whole. What is this that rises from her, through the high cypresses, towards our soul ? What counsel have

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her glory and her genius for us ? It is this counsel that we would chiefly ask of her. Without it, how can the beauty of the Past touch us, how can we see it freed from the wrappings of the tomb ? I have tried to set it down for you as I received it from the ever-living City, so passionately living that we forget her immortality. And if I have made it clear to you, you will distinguish, as I do, above the city, her river, her sanctuaries, and her palaces, the immaterial and serene figure of that Lady Beauty, the aureole round her brows and the red lily at her breast.

C. M.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

SINCE Monsieur Mauclair's book was written certain changes have been made in the galleries of Florence, groups of pictures having been transferred from one to another. It would have been impracticable to note each of these changes in the body of the work wherever the pictures concerned are referred to. But visitors to Florence who will use this book rather as a companion than as a guide-book will readily acquaint themselves with the changes that have been made, such as the transference of the principal works of Fra Angelico to S. Marco, of the Primavera by Botticelli, and other works formerly in the Accademia to the Uffizi, and the portraits of painters from the Uffizi to the Pitti.

At the end of the book the works of artists mentioned in it are indexed without reference to the galleries in which they are found.

C. B.

March 1927

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CHAPTER I

THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF FLORENCE

LITTLE need be said of the antique origin of Florence in a book which makes no pretension to archæological erudition. The city is situated at the heart of that rich and admirable country where Etruscan civilization developed, to be slowly subjugated by a warlike and barbarous Latium.

In the year 90 B.C. Florentia, like her neighbour, Fæsulæ, received the rights of a Roman city, and ten years later Sulla placed a garrison here. The nucleus which had existed there for very many years had taken on importance since the Romans had brought through it one of their great strategical and commercial highroads, the Cassian Way, which led on to Bologna. Florentia, 'the city of flowers,' had a capitol, thermæ, an amphitheatre, a temple of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva; and Fæsulæ also had an amphitheatre. In the beginning of the Middle Ages the history of these two towns is obscure and uninteresting. Under the Frankish Princes the country kept its

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old name of Tuscia, recalling its Etruscan origin from the great civilizing kingdom which gave to all Italy its writing, trade, and inventions, before it disappeared in the third century B.C. beneath the repeated blows of the Romans. It was only with the great Countess Matilda, the friend of Gregory VII, that Florentia, her name changing first to Fiorenza, then to Firenze, became a centre. She commanded the passage of the Arno, the road between Germany and Rome. After the death of Matilda in 1115, the prosperity of Florence grew steadily, although her future rival, Pisa, was already a city to be reckoned with, both in war and the arts of peace. In 1125, Fæsulæ, now called Fiesole, was destroyed, and its inhabitants passed over to Florence. It is from this time that we must begin our survey.

The history of Florence is so intimately bound up with the history of the whole Peninsula that it is difficult in a summary to separate it ; and to sum up, so far as it affects Florence, the history of the Peninsula is an even more troublesome task. There never was a more wild entanglement of facts, almost inextricable and wholly incomprehensible to anyone who does not understand the extraordinary mixture of energy and indolence, of pride and astuteness, of caprice, intrigue, enthusiasm, nationalism, prejudice, confidence, and defiance which makes up Italian psychology, at any rate in political matters. The foreigner, German, French, or Spanish, may invade and take possession of Italy ; this psychology will

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always remain an enigma to him. Thus I shall only try and recall here—while noting the events for which Florence served as theatre or those which she inspired—the great essential movements with which her destiny was bound up : a destiny not paramount like that of Rome, but still of the first importance like that of Naples and of Milan. It was in the world of the intellect that she originated and directed everywhere.

In 1200 Florence, under the government of four Consuls, declared herself a Guelph city in the great Imperial and Papal quarrel of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. She was to become the scene of a confused series of bloody dramas. Manfred, Prince of Tarento, having become King of Sicily, helped the banished Ghibellines to return to Florence, with the treacherous complicity of Farinata degli Uberti. But the defeat and death of Manfred at Grandella in 1126, allowed his conqueror, Charles d'Anjou, to attack Florence, now once more Ghibelline, and put to flight the leader, Guido Novello. The Ghibelline attempt of Conradin of Hohenstaufen ended in his defeat at Palenta and his execution (1268). The cruelty of Charles brought about the Sicilian Vespers (1282), the destruction of his fleet at Messina by the squadrons of Don Pedro of Aragon, and the fall of his power. French influence supplanted that of Imperial Germany. The Papacy, outraged in the person of Boniface VIII by Philippe le Bel, took refuge in France with Clement V. Popular liberty, set free at once from Pope and Emperor,

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dreamt of a new life and power to organize itself. In 1282 Florence set up an Executive Council or *Signoria*, composed of the Priors of the Arts, that is to say, of the masters chosen from each profession: the *Greater Arts*—judges, notaries, bankers, physicians, mercers, furriers and cloth merchants; and the *Lesser Arts*—dyers, wool-combers, cleaners, blacksmiths, and stonecutters. There was more or less political equality between the burghers who traded (*popolani nobili*) and the workmen (*minori artisti*). Only the nobles, the true *nobili*, were excluded from all rights, and could only hope to obtain them by matriculating into one of the trade guilds. Thus did plebeian reaction show an abhorrence of that nobility which had so often overthrown Italian cities. A gentleman named Giano della Bella, who had joined the People's party, went still further: on being made a Prior of the Arts he deprived thirty-seven noble families of the right to matriculate and had a law passed that this right should be refused to any family if one of their members had committed a crime within ten years. The citizens were organized for war in twenty companies commanded by *Gonfalonieri*, and headed by a superior Gonfalonier, elected by the Signoria. A rebellion drove Giano della Bella into exile in 1294. It does not affect the fact that he was the first liberal and democratic Tribune of Florence, the first of a series of heroes and martyrs who were to safeguard her republican independence through centuries of disturbed, obscure, and terrible history.

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Florence, now once more Guelph, defeated at Campaldino the forces of Pisa and Arezzo, among whom the banished Ghibellines had taken refuge ; the young Dante, soon in his turn to become an exile, took part in this battle. Pisa's humiliation meant the rise of Florence ; she had then ninety thousand inhabitants, a hundred and ten churches, thirty thousand weavers, twenty-five thousand men-at-arms ; the arts and letters flourished in her whose " glory " in the words of Villani, " rose as Rome declined." And yet Dante was already right in foreseeing that this Italian prosperity, built up on a foundation of the worst political dissensions, was deceptive, and that once freed from Pope and Emperor, this unequal union of principalities and republics would succumb to domestic quarrels. By turns repelling and appealing to the foreigner, passing from an aristocratic tyranny to the anarchy of mob rule, Florence, like the other cities of Italy, was destined to live without peace and to be the victim of her inconstant and extravagant passions. To squander liberty and independence in the struggle between classes, parties, families : such was the evil fate of Italy. During the effacement of the Papal power owing to its exile in France and of the Imperial power in Germany, weakened by feudalism, it had the chance to organize itself as a nation. It refused to do so, and remained Guelph and Ghibelline when these words had lost all meaning ; it so behaved that, when the Popes and Emperors returned to seize it, they found it as much a

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place of devastation and division as it had been before.

In 1310 Clement V and Henry VII of Luxemburg came to an agreement in order to bring back order and unity into Italy. Henry VII crossed the Alps, and the Ghibelline exile Dante put all his hopes, all his trust in him. The Emperor died almost at once before he could attack the Guelphs of Florence, who had committed their cause to King Robert of Naples. At Alto Poscio, Castracani, the Ghibelline, defeated the Florentines, who were badly led by Raimondo de' Cardone (1317), then appealed to the new Emperor Ludwig of Bavaria, who deposed the Guelph Pope John XXII, but roused the indignation of all parties by his exactions and was forced to recross the Alps (1329). Once more illusions as to chivalry and the Holy See proved to be vain; the power of the burghers and of money proved solid. The attempt at unification made in 1330 by John, King of Bohemia, the future hero of Crécy, failed; he quickly went away, routed by that Italian versatility which was so often to astonish, attract, and disgust the foreigner. Florence, threatened by Mastino della Scala of Verona, gathered a league against him; she got no advantage from it—not even the possession of Lucca, the object of the dispute; for Pisa seized on that city after a victory over her rival (1431). Florence then, attributing this reverse to the incapacity of her free government, chose as a leader Walter de Brienne, Duke of Athens. This adventurer

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flattered people and nobles alike, seized the Signoria, and showed himself to be so cunning and so cruel, that in 1343 the people laid siege to him in the Palazzo Vecchio and forced him to fly the city.

Dante had died an exile at Ravenna in 1327. His posthumous influence became immense ; Florence was ashamed of her unworthy conduct towards the man who had created the sacred national poem of Italy. There was another poet whom she made as much of as if he had been a king—Petrarch, the son of a Florentine citizen, who, like Dante, had been banished. The consciousness of the necessity for unity and high effort again filled all hearts after so many mistakes, discords, and contradictions. The splendid but deluded endeavour to found an antique republic in Rome twice attempted by Niccola di Rienzi (1347-1354), the terrible plague of 1348, the ridiculous exploit of the Emperor Charles of Luxemburg in 1356, all gave some rude shocks to Italian illusions. Popes, emperors, tentative republics, all were powerless against the quarrels of parties, despots, and mercenaries. Italian history becomes an inextricable tangle towards the end of the fourteenth century. Urban V, elected Pope in 1362, came to Italy to try and conquer the Romagna from the Visconti ; they flung against Florence two condottieri, the German Landau, and the Englishman Hawkwood. Albornoz, the Pope's Legate, sent Malatesta with an army, and Florence was saved. Charles IV of Luxemburg, who returned

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in 1368, gave no more genuine help to the Papacy when it called for it than he did in 1370. The Pope and Emperor, invoked by Petrarch, as formerly by Dante, were powerless among the chaos of this magnificent but bewildered land, given up to the worst type of adventurer. Florence finally broke with the Pope's legates and allied herself with the Visconti; the struggle grew more desperate and more illogical than ever; Petrarch died in 1374, as hopeless as Dante, inconsolable at the ruin of his beautiful dreams.

Florence, in her conflict with the Church had, by a strange veering of aim, become once more partly Ghibelline. It was then that one of the Gonfalonieri, Silvestro de' Medici, a citizen of the Lesser Arts, brought forward a law intended to protect the people from the nobles and called the populace to arms; but he had not the boldness of vision of a Giano della Bella, and the furious demands of the *Ciampi*, exasperated by their misery and the deceitful tricks of the burghers and nobles, far outran the proposals formulated in their name by Silvestro. He fled, and the *Ciampi* chose as Gonfalonier, Michele Lando, a barefooted woolcarder, the first to enter the Palazzo Vecchio when it was forced by the insurgent crowd.

Lando set up a government of nine members—three from the Greater Arts, three from the Lesser Arts, and three from the common people. This did not prevent these last from demanding from him certain unacceptable financial measures such

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as the repudiation of all debts and the repayment of the capital by the State Bank. Lando refused, silenced the *Ciampi*, who detested him, was tricked by the burghers of the Lesser Arts, and returned disheartened to his home to work at his humble trade. In 1382 the Guelphs, with the support of Charles III of Naples, came back to power, did away with the democratic reforms, and drove Michele Lando to die in exile. He is, with Giano della Bella, the noblest popular figure which has yet appeared in an ungrateful Florence to struggle to make the people worthy of self-government.

The Guelphs and the Greater Arts triumphed. The Albizzi seized the opportunity of the fall of Gian Galeazzo of Milan to subdue Pisa, the old rival of whom Florence had been so jealous. It fell in 1406. Florence joined in the intrigues over the question of the Papal Schism between Gregory XII the Pope in Italy and Benedict XIII the Pope at Avignon. She brought about the election of John XXIII, but paid dearly for her policy of successive treacheries by a quarrel with the condottiere Braccio da Montrone, whom she had at first set up in opposition to Sforza. The Council of Constance (1418) and the election of Martin V, which annulled that of the three other popes and made an end to the Great Schism, mercifully caused a lull. It did not last. Menaced by Filippo Maria Visconti and his captain, Carmagnuola, the Florentines allied themselves with Venice, Ferrara, and the King of Aragon. Piccinino

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defeated them in 1430 on the banks of the Serchio, but peace was signed in 1432.

The Medici family had continued to concern themselves with public affairs ; after the death of Silvestro and of Giovanni de' Medici, the leader of the democratic party, the Albizzi leaders of the aristocracy had seized the power and had even exiled Cosimo, now the head of the house. But in 1434 he was recalled, the Albizzi in their turn were driven out, and Cosimo was proclaimed " the benefactor of the people and the father of his country." Cosimo took Francesco Sforza into the service of the Republic, and defeated Piccinino, the condottiere of the Visconti, at the battle of Anghiari. He promoted the amazing fortunes of Sforza, acting as his banker, and helped him to crush the ephemeral Milanese Republic and to be crowned as Duke of Milan. From that time Cosimo's secret design was to establish in Upper Italy, on the ruins of the old dream of Italian liberty, two powerful States, two princely houses, those of Sforza and Medici, to hold the balance true against Papal Rome and Republican Venice. The alliance between Cosimo and Sforza changed the whole situation. Here, where pope and emperor had failed, the son of a fuller, and the son of a peasant, strong in political and military genius, born of the people and knowing how to make use of them, were to create the principle of despotism. The dictatorship of princes wiped out the old quarrels of Guelphs and Ghibellines, emperor's men and pope's men. Florence lost her liberty, illusory,

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bloody, and exhausting as it was, to yield herself to the luxurious authority of a dynasty. Cosimo was a great man; he made an end to a tragic period in the history of his country; he was to set her free for incomparable flights in letters and in the arts. The proscription of the Ghibellines, the obstinate and sanguinary war against Pisa, the furious rivalry of the burghers and the plebs—these are the three great motives of political life in Florence between 1200 and 1440. She alternately worshipped and executed her tribunes, appealed to pope or emperor, or made war on them. If, being unworthy of liberty, she was doomed to fall into the hands of one man, at least that man was great in will, intellect, and passionate love of his native city. Between the republican ideas of a Giano and a Lando, and obedience to the Pope, or the Germans, the intelligent despotism of a Cosimo seemed the most desirable middle way, and the only possible one; a patrician born of the middle classes, impartially silencing the cruel arrogance of the nobles, and the madness of the populace.

Cosimo de' Medici was a great statesman and the protector of the art of the Renaissance. His death in 1464 led to a fruitless attempt to restore a republic, baffled by his son Piero, who set up a committee of five members to choose, every two months, the Gonfalonier and the Priors. In 1469 Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici were recognized as heads of the government. Lorenzo, soon known as the Magnificent, was, like Cosimo,

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a great man. His sagacious protection of the arts and letters did not prevent him from assuring the political power of Florence. The ambition of Sixtus IV and his nepotism drove him to make a league with Venice and Milan (1474). His usurpation of power which deprived them of public office, led the rich banker family of the Pazzi to plot with Sixtus IV, his nephews, and Ferdinand of Naples, to assassinate the Medici, and bring about a revolution. In 1478, in the Duomo of Florence, the Pazzi murdered Giuliano, but Lorenzo was able to defend himself; the assault on the palace failed, and the people, deaf to republican appeals, chose rather to attack the conspirators. The Pazzi ended on the scaffold.

Thus the plebs, once so enthusiastic at the call of a Giano or a Lando, no longer even dreamed of making trial of that liberty which it had done so little to deserve. Lorenzo was left alone, stronger than ever. But the Pope was determined on vengeance. Venice was crushed by the Turks, Milan turned against Florence, and Sixtus IV also induced Ferdinand of Naples to attack her. Lorenzo appeased Ferdinand by ceding Siena to him, the menace of the Turks to Naples was urgent enough to make the Pope himself tremble, and Florence was able to make a reconciliation with the Holy See. All through this period, Italy, absorbed in the miserable and treacherous quarrels of her Princes, leaves the Ottoman to his triumphs, instead, as she should have done, after the terrible warning of the fall of Constanti-

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nople, of uniting them for a common effort. Moreover, after suffering the tyranny of the condottieri, she formed the habit of drawing down a new peril on herself by inviting the Swiss into Lombardy, that is, by opening the door to the foreigner. We may sum up the history of Italy in the Middle Ages by saying that in spite of certain farseeing popes, princes, poets, and men of the people, she did her utmost to tempt the foreigner, offering herself to him as a prey, and by her domestic rivalries dissipated the fair dream of an independent nation. Never did a rich and favoured country more passionately work her own ruin.

Lorenzo de' Medici was always on the watch to keep the balance between all the Powers who contended for the country—the foreigner ready to spring from the North, the Ottoman from the sea. An ally of Ferdinand of Naples, of Lodovico Sforza, of Innocent VIII, he practised that policy of cunning, scepticism, and cold energy which Machiavelli was to codify. His whole aim was to lull the spirit of liberty to sleep beneath such a magnificence of art as should heighten the splendour of despotism and delude the people. The other despots followed his example. Luxury, material prosperity, the brilliancy of art and letters, choked any feeble desire for independence. But the secret springs of this seeming activity and fruitfulness were spent ; a public life without freedom, an art without true religious feeling, morals which had sunk to the lowest depths of violence, perfidy, depravity, such was the reverse side of this alluring

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luxury. This Renaissance was ripe for decadence. There were men who understood how the danger of this insolent burst of splendour lay in the decay of moral, religious and soldierly ideals, in spite of apparent results due to clever policy and the favours of fortune. Above all they were revolted by the loss of religious faith, the unworthiness of the Holy See: the shameless intrusion of Paganism under the cloak of the humanities, the Roman scandals of Papal elections contrived by a most cynical simony like that of the monster Alexander VI. These things filled with shame and fury those lonely minds who held the severe ideals of Dante and prophesied that God's anger would show itself in a new invasion of the Barbarians. A Dominican, Girolamo Savonarola, dared to stand up in Florence against the power of Lorenzo and the Pope. He dreamed of political and religious reforms, preached publicly a return to purer morals, terrified the crowd by announcing "a new Cyrus," and vainly summoned Lorenzo, then on his death-bed, to give the city back her liberty.

He did not prophesy in vain. Piero de' Medici and Ferdinand of Naples having united against the ambition of Lodovico Il Moro, that prince appealed to Charles VIII of France, the heir to the rights of the House of Anjou in Naples, who was meditating an expedition into Italy. Thus the Princes, having divided up and tyrannized over the Peninsula, in the end betrayed her: and she let herself be betrayed through weariness, through illusion, through a desire for novelty. Every one

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looked to the conqueror whose youth and chivalry were irresistible in Florence. The Republicans hoped that he would overthrow the Medici ; in Rome they counted on his driving out the vile Borgia who polluted the Papal throne ; in Naples the nobles longed for the fall of Ferdinand ; in Milan Lodovico meant by sacrificing Naples to retain through this alliance the most powerful State in Northern Italy, and to revenge himself on Florence. Moreover, they all believed that Charles VIII would render them these services and leave them for further enterprises. He would only pass through the Peninsula on his way to make war on Constantinople or to deliver Jerusalem.

Of all those moments in her history when Italy showed herself most insanely lacking in foresight, this was assuredly the most serious. Il Moro's appeal to the French, its blind acceptance by the whole country, were to paralyse Italy for four centuries, ruin for ever her dream of unity and independence, and transform her land into a place of incessant battles. Charles VIII only passed through, as the German Emperors had passed long ago ; he enthroned Lodovico Il Moro, the murderer and despoiler of his nephew Gian Galeazzo, and marched on Florence. Piero de' Medici in alarm submitted and sought the victor in his camp, mistakenly believing he would thus ensure his authority in the city ; on his return, the people drove him out, pillaged his palaces, and when the King of France entered Florence, Savonarola and the Gonfalonier Capponi induced him by

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their firmness to abandon the Medici. Then he departed to subdue Naples, after a demonstration against Rome. Savonarola, left master of Florence, set up a great Council of citizens charged with the control of the Signoria, a real limited suffrage ; in order to correct the effeminacy and scepticism of the city he wished to impose on the people the severe rules of a lay monastery, and he desired to impose these rules also on Pisa, which Charles VIII had set free. Charles swiftly destroyed the hopes which had been founded on him ; and the roughness of his troops alarmed the Italians, who were used to the courteous war of the condottieri. Venice having invoked against him a formidable league consisting of the Pope, Maximilian of Germany, Ferdinand of Aragon, and finally of Lodovico Il Moro, who did not trouble himself to be grateful, he turned back suddenly from Naples to avoid being cut off from France, passed through Italy, refused to give Pisa back to Florence, but abstained from forcing Piero de' Medici on her. At Fornova, in 1495, he overthrew the army of the Allies and re-entered his kingdom.

It was but an exploit of chivalry ; but the foreigner had found again the door into Italy. A Republican Florence, imbued by the ancient spirit of the Guelphs, the solitary ally of the French, owed to their departure a new change in her fortunes—Savonarola resisted the League, now turned against Florence, who wished to re-take Pisa. It did not forgive her fidelity to Charles VIII. Alexander VI, whom the austere monk had not



THE CONVENT OF SANTA CROCE



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spared in his invectives, accused him of heresy ; the partisans of the Medici, the debauchees, the nobles, all inflamed opinion against him. Savonarola rejected the authority of an unworthy Pope and invoked his divine mission ; the Augustinian monk, Fra Francesco di Puglia, whose order was the rival of that of the Dominican Tribune proposed the ordeal by fire. A monk, a follower of Savonarola, accepted it, but refused to face the flames unless he might bear the Host in his hands, which the Franciscans would not permit. A storm put an end to the dispute ; but next day the people, who had thus been cheated, besieged the Dominican monastery. Savonarola was arrested, hastily tried, and burnt. The trick of Alexander VI, the Borgia, and his abuse of dogmatic authority, thus succeeded against the noble man who was the last to attempt to give Florence the sense of the worth of freedom. He did for her what Rienzi had done for Rome, knew, like him, hours of great power, and like him, too, was requited with hideous ingratitude.

The noblest minds, the most lofty artists, such as Botticelli and Lorenzo di Credi, who were so much moved by the ascetic saint and prophet as to burn all their profane works at his instigation, and even Michelangelo himself, were inconsolable for the fall and death of the humble monk whom Dante would have immortalized and who, in a period of tyranny, of appeal to foreign mercenaries, of debauch and of unbelief, was incarnate Faith, Freedom, Patriotism, and Morality. The supreme

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effort to awaken the Italian conscience died out with Savonarola. Three hundred years had to pass before another was to be made.

The arrival of Louis XII, who claimed Lombardy as the heir of the Visconti, brought troublous and bloody times. He punished Lodovico Il Moro, who fell a victim to his own treachery and to his appeals to the foreigner. He promised Florence his support against Pisa, which, happy at having broken the yoke of her cruel rival, was defending herself bravely and, moreover, succeeded in winning the sympathy of the French. Cæsar Borgia, the nephew of Alexander VI, plotting and making war through all the Peninsula, menaced Florence, who made a pact with him, using Machiavelli as mediator ; the accession of Julius II, the fall of the Borgia, the formation of the League of Cambrai (1508) against Venice finally decided the fate of Pisa. To induce Florence, the only Italian Republic, to remain indifferent to the fate of the Venetian Republic, the King of France and the King of Spain sold for one hundred and fifty thousand ducats the unfortunate city, which was thus once more definitely brought into subjection. This political success was a fleeting one. Julius II, his aims contented when he had contrived the defeat of Venice at Agnadel by Louis XII, turned against the French, dreaming of driving them out now their use was past, as the Barbarians had been driven out before. He announced his desire to be a great patriot Pope, leading all to work for Italian unity under the high authority of the Holy

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See. The Holy League was founded: Swiss, Germans, Venetians, Romans, all united. The swift and crushing victories won by Gaston de Foix, from December, 1511, to April, 1512, nearly ruined his scheme. But when the young hero had fallen at Ravenna, in the midst of his triumph, Julius II again had the advantage, and the French everywhere gave way. Florence lost her republican liberty. Piero de' Medici was dead, fighting against the French. Giuliano and Giovanni were brought back by their allies, the Gonfalonier Soderini was put to flight, and after eighteen years of exile the Medici came back to power (1512). Julius II died the next year, and twenty days later Giovanni de' Medici, the new master of Florence, became Pope under the name of Leo X (1513). Thus the son of Il Magnifico, after long exile, became the master not only of Florence, but of Rome, and the most powerful sovereign in Italy, ready to make real the dream of temporal and spiritual unification, dreamed by Julius II.

Leo X attacked Venice, in pursuance of the shifting policy of his predecessor, and to enrich his family. François I crossed the Alps and at Marignano (1515) triumphed over the Swiss and Spanish sent against him by the Pope. The Pope found consolation in providing for his nephews, in dispossessing, on their behalf, the Duke of Urbino, in torturing and killing several cardinals who protested, and in cloaking his cruelties and knavish tricks with the luxury and art of the Papal Court. Leo X was no more, in

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anything, than the degenerate imitator of Julius II's ideal. What we know as the age of Leo X should bear the name, and deservedly, of Julius II. A Medici unworthy of Cosimo and of Lorenzo, the frivolous, implacable, and cynical Leo X more closely resembles Alexander VI than that soldier-Pope who dreamt of a free Italy, and whose very faults contained so much fire, goodness and grandeur. The fall of Papal Rome, which had become a centre of corruption, was, however, close at hand. In 1515 Luther began to draw up his terrible theses, and in 1519 Charles V was elected Emperor of Germany. The Imperial peril, the ancient peril which Innocent III had fought against, was born again, and this time was complicated by a heretic revolution. Leo X was no more worthy of Innocent III than of Julius II. He allied himself with the Emperor in order to obtain the condemnation of Luther, and helped him in return to drive out the French. This was to admit a master into Italy, and a master who was powerless to stifle schism. The Imperial troops only beat the French at La Bicoque that they might install themselves in Genoa and Milan. Florence, like the other towns, had to pay Colonna's Spaniards fifteen thousand ducats a month for the support of his troops. The new Pope, Adrian VI, the Flemish tutor of Charles V, did not interfere, and the Italians, once undeceived, quickly detested him. When Giulio de' Medici became Pope under the name of Clement VII, he soon understood, through the successive defeats of the

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French, the danger of having allowed the Imperial troops to establish their mastery. He spoke of peace, hesitated, and made a treaty of neutrality with François I, who had recrossed the Alps and was attacking Pavia. Here the King of France was vanquished and taken prisoner (1525). Italy was made subject to the Empire. When François I ended his captivity, the Pope directed the formation of a "Holy League" to deliver the Peninsula from those Germans and Spaniards whom Leo X had called in. It was a tardy, honourable, but vain attempt. The death of the celebrated Giovanni delle Bande Nere, the only warrior of the House of Medici, and the most famous of condottieri, removed the one leader capable of saving Italy. It meant the defeat of the Pope's allies, the invasion of North and Central Italy by Bourbon, the German Frundsberg, and his hordes of Lutheran lansquenets, fierce and thirsty for vengeance on Rome, whom they called the "Babylon the sacrilegious." They put Rome to the sack in 1527. Thus Leo X had laid open Italy to the Emperor to obtain his support against Luther, and nine years later it was the German Lutherans who, in the Emperor's despite, set fire to Rome, as once before Alaric had set fire to her, and dealt a blow both at Papal unworthiness and at the artistic and philosophic liberalism of the Pagan Renaissance.

The fall of Rome forced the Pope, after a frustrated appeal to François, to yield to Charles V. Florence had once more made an attempt to

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establish a Republic, and amongst its Republican partisans we note the *arrabiati* (the infuriated) and the *piagnoni* (the weepers). These had the upper hand, under the leadership of their Gonfalonier Carducci, when Clement V loosed the Spanish bands against the city. Florence organized her defence; Michelangelo made her fortifications, and the condottiere, Malatesta de Baglione, commanded the troops. But in spite of heroic sorties. Baglione, when he realized that it was useless to continue to resist the Prince of Orange and Ferdinando da Gonzaga, who were blockading the town, treacherously delivered it up to them. The Florentines paid eighty thousand crowns and took back the Medici, demanding for themselves liberty and an amnesty. None the less, the enemies of the Medici were banished or put to death, and Alessandro de' Medici, created Duke by Charles V, was reinstated. He suppressed Signoria, Gonfaloniere, and Parliament; created a senate of forty *ottimati*, who declared him to be perpetual and hereditary Duke (1530).

In 1537 the tyrant was assassinated by Lorenzino de' Medici, whose name and crime inspired Musset with his drama "Lorenzaccio." The Strozzi, whom Alessandro had banished, tried in vain to restore liberty under cover of the deed; the dead Duke was hastily replaced by another Medici, Cosimo, the son of Giovanni delle Bande Nere, and all was at an end. Cosimo, with Spanish and German troops, attacked Piero Strozzi after having defeated his father and made Siena, the last free

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Italian city, capitulate in 1559. The Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis reconciled Spain and France, but Italy paid the price of this agreement in her definite subjugation. Pope and princes were alike brought down, and the Republican ideal disappeared, never to return; peace at any price, the destruction of licence as of the noblest liberties of humanism by a severe and superstitious piety, under the advice of the Jesuits and the Inquisition, the dictatorial protection of the Holy See against the vast Protestant movement, complete submission to the Spanish-Germans in exchange for their protection—such was the desire of the whole Peninsula. Florence henceforward has no private history. She is like any other principality. Her marvellous activity in art had been diverted to Rome under Leo X; she could not, and did not, desire a return to political or moral independence. Cosimo was a cruel and gloomy tyrant, but bloody palace tragedies did not prevent Pius V, in 1569, from creating him a grand duke, though without definite rights; and his son Francesco, confirmed in his title by the Spanish Court, and married, first to an Archduchess, then to his mistress Bianca Capella, became wholly an Austrian prince. A conspiracy against him failed in 1575. He left Florence, Pisa, and Tuscany to decay. His successor, Francesco I, Grand Duke of Tuscany, made amends at least for his material faults. He repaired Pisa and Leghorn, changed the course of the Arno, drained the Maremma round Siena, agreed with Sixtus V to attempt to shake off the

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Spanish rule and make an alliance with Henri IV of France. Sixtus V died in 1590 without having dared to attempt a war of independence; but Clement VIII upheld the French alliance in conjunction with Ferdinand. Marie de' Medici married Henri IV. The Spanish decadence began with the Peace of Vervins and the death of Philip II (1598). Cosimo II of Tuscany let Ferdinand's projects drop. Ferdinand II confined himself to the encouragement of agriculture and of trade. At Florence, as elsewhere, the enervation of Italy was complete. Science claims in Florence two such men as Torricelli and Galileo. Ferdinand II, the pupil of this last, had at least the honour of obtaining a mitigation of his punishment after he had been condemned by the Holy Office at Rome, and made Florence a scientific centre in the seventeenth century. He helped Venice in a vain defence of Candia against the Turks. His successor, Cosimo III, proud and bigoted, abandoned his intellectual efforts, and quarrelled with France over his wife, Marguerite d'Orléans. After the victory of the armies of Louis XIV he was made to pay one hundred thousand crowns to Prince Eugene of Savoy, and he did not even attempt to ally himself with Louis XIV against an Austria which was draining Italy dry. He died in 1723, and Gian Gastone, his successor, had no male heir. Tuscany dreamed of independence, for the duchy had only been granted to the Medici in the direct male line. But the Powers wrangled over the succession.

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Don Carlos, son of the King of Spain, was chosen by the Emperor as Hereditary Prince; then, in consequence of a new political combination, the Duke François Etienne of Lorraine was definitely made Grand Duke in 1737. The husband of Maria Theresa, when he became Emperor, gave Tuscany a quasi-independence of Austria. His son, Leopold I, revived French influence after the fall of the Spanish rule, and Florence, thanks to him, enjoyed a revival of Liberalism and a new life in her administration. He was a Jansenist, and called a Council at Pistoia in 1689, the resolutions of which were disputed by Pius VI. The French Revolution, instead of inspiring the Liberalism which was trying to revive, alarmed Italy. She was timid, pacified, and subjugated, content with the reforms of her Austrian princes and too forgetful of the proud rebellions of her past to dare to reach out her hand to the French arrayed against all the monarchies. On the contrary, she drew closer to Austria. The Grand Duke Ferdinand was the first to recognize the French Republic, then Venice imitated him; but the rest of Italy did not follow this movement. The lightning campaign of Bonaparte threw the country into confusion and filled the masses with enthusiasm. The Grand Duchy remained neutral and friendly; but this neutrality did not satisfy the Directory, whose aim was a united and republican Italy. In 1799 Berthier dismissed the Grand Duke and set up a republican government in Florence. Three months later Bonaparte

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was in Egypt, the French generals were being defeated by Suwarrow, the Grand Duke had returned, reaction was everywhere triumphant. Marengo (1800) re-established the French power, but Bonaparte would have no more Italian Republics ; the Consul of the 18 Brumaire was no longer the General of the Directory. Florence became the capital of the kingdom of Etruria, the new name of Tuscany, and was given to the son of the Duke of Parma and Piacenza, but Murat was her true master. In 1808 Tuscany was reunited to France and received judicial and commercial reforms which restored great prosperity to her. But events once more changed the face of Europe. In June, 1814, after the fall of Murat and of Prince Eugene, Italy was given back to the Austrian monarchy and in September the Grand Duke Ferdinand returned to Tuscany as its master. Nothing remained of French achievement—nothing at all but the spirit of liberty and unity which Napoleon had left behind him, and which Austrian tyranny was to exasperate into the revolt of the ancient soul of Italy, and the heroic conquest of liberty. The triumphant passage of France had awakened people disheartened and enervated by two hundred and fifty years of servitude.

From then onwards Florence only played an insignificant part in the great drama of independence, which began in 1820 with the revolution attempted by Pepe and Santa-Rosa in Piedmont and Naples. The next act was in 1830. The Grand Duke Leopold of Tuscany was wise and

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liberal, started railways, re-established the University of Pisa, drove out the Jesuits, and made Tuscany a land dear to foreigners. In 1848 the Duke granted a constitution, in pursuance of the irresistible movement which came from Rome and Naples and was born of the exciting events in Paris. An Austrian prince, it was with repugnance that he lent his aid to the attempt made by the heroic Charles Albert of Sardinia to win independence for the Peninsula. After Custozza, the Grand Duke commissioned Montanelli to form a ministry ; and he, with the project of an Italian constitution in view, profited by the absence of the Grand Duke and the emotion caused, after the murder of Count Rossi at Rome, by the flight and collapse of Pius IX, to proclaim a republic at Florence and to form a Triumvirate with Guerrazzi and Mazzini (1849). The Grand Duke took refuge at Gaeta with Pius IX. The tide of revolution rising against Austria engulfed Charles Albert. The king of Sardinia made a supreme effort to drive out the foreigner, and to control the movement for independence with order and system. The defeat of Novara destroyed his hopes. On April 12th the Gonfaloniere Peruzzi reassumed authority in Florence in the name of the Grand Duke, and the Austrians definitely reinstalled him in May. Leopold suppressed the constitution, and had himself guarded by Austrian troops at great expense. It was the complete return of servitude. After Solferino (1859), Florence, like Modena and Bologna, wished to be united to the

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kingdom of Sardinia under Victor Emmanuel II. In 1860 she responded a second time to a consultation which Napoleon III exacted from Cavour, by refusing Tuscan autonomy and demanding to be annexed to the new Italian kingdom. In 1864 Victor Emmanuel, not yet daring to seize Rome, and no longer able, now he was master of the rest of Italy, to content himself with Turin, chose Florence as his capital. She was the Italian capital until July 1, 1871, the day when the King definitely established himself in Rome after the suppression of the Papal States.

What broad general idea emerges from this stormy recital of events which I have to condense so dryly? It is that of a constant struggle between the principle of a Republic and the principle of despotism, a double appeal which allured and disappointed the Florentine spirit, at once jealous of its freedom and by nature aristocratic and luxurious. Liberty was a dream which she cherished only when it was unrealizable, and of which, having achieved it, she made extravagant and violent use. Her tribunes were alone in acting on logical premises till the day when a family powerful through its craftiness and its riches took possession of her, and did not hesitate to call in the foreigner as often as was necessary to maintain its power, in spite of the hatred and fury of the enslaved people. We may deplore the fact that Florentine liberty should have been crushed by this terrible family, which, moreover, poisoned the art and politics of France through

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its French branch, the evil branch of Charles IX and of his mother, the sinister Catherine. But it is sadly true that this liberty was really no more than a heady Utopian dream, and that without the Medici and their domination Florence would never have had that astounding splendour which still dazzles us. Savonarola and the elder Cosimo are the embodied antithesis of the ascetic dream and the sceptical reality, of the mystical Middle Ages and the dissolute Renaissance. The Florence of Dante and the Primitives died with Savonarola ; she was worth more than the Florence of the younger Cosimo, but the one lasted but a short time, and it is the other which is the true Florence.

To sum up, we may say, at least as far as concerns the aim of this book, that, in the worst disorders of society, Florence, in contrast to Rome, saved herself from degradation by the obstinate love of an ideal. It was not the Medici who gave her this ideal ; usurers, bankers, astute politicians, treacherous burghers, their ideal was that of a plutocrat power. But the artists whom they protected found one in religion, in formal beauty, in a contempt of all life which did not enshrine a passionate meaning. In this society of assassins, debauchees, cruel and shifty politicians, of high-placed murderers, of infidel Popes, of shameless courtiers, of greedy misers, of traitors, and of sophists, all equally the prey of exasperated passions, two kinds of beings have saved her honour, and given to Florence, as they gave to all

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Italy, the magical beauty which we admire to-day : her women and her artists.

If, in this confused crowd, certain representative figures attain greatness—that of Cosimo the Elder, by his political genius ; that of Giovanni delle Bande Nere by his splendour as a magnificent fighting animal, and the tragedy of his death at twenty-eight ; that of Machiavelli by his piercing vision of the actualities of an epoch, cruel beyond all others—yet none of these suffices to express Florence with her virtues and her vices in the presence of history. Their aims were less great than their talents ; they had not enough affection for their country to make their work durable ; they were actors whose swift effects were soon forgotten ; and the pale and vicious Lorenzaccio, the dilettante murderer, drunk with Plutarch, is the very type of this activity doomed to nothingness. The women, neglected and forgotten, doubly widowed by desertion and by the premature death of their warrior husbands, were pious, gentle, deserving, and pure souls. Beside them the artists are the only true Florentine types whom we have to remember. The examination of such a prodigious succession of social avatars might make one think that in such an atmosphere the artistic genius of the race could not survive. The miracle of the Florentine character has been, on the contrary, to draw its strength from this frenzied combat, this instability of national life : the worst debauchees, the most ferocious murderers, cardinals who were poisoners, condottieri,

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secret assassins and plunderers, all possess this strange grace of loving beauty, and helping those who create it; never have artists carried out their work with more magnificence or thrown themselves more ardently into contemporary life. These lived like saints, the others like devils, but in both alike art seems an abnormal, miraculous strewing of flowers over this vast convulsion, this sanguinary drama which, after the epic of the Middle Ages, was sullied with vice and corruption throughout the Renaissance.

CHAPTER II

FLORENTINE PAINTING FROM CIMABUE TO FILIPPO LIPPI

THE whole evolution of Italian art consists of a resurrection of antique art progressively uniting itself to Christian mysticism, giving life to Byzantine hieratic forms by its realism, and finally in the sixteenth century, attaining first to a prodigious expansion of humanism, then to pagan sensuality, before it yields, under the sudden menace of the Reformation, to that priestly reaction which, through the Jesuit style, ushered in the decadence. The Popes alternately fought and favoured this resurrection. Its history is a true intellectual epic.

Between the official recognition of Christianity by Constantine (313) to the birth of Cimabue (1240) lie centuries of obscurity, terror, devastation, and barbarism.

The soul of Italy grew up amid blood and darkness. Only a few facts need be remembered at the beginning of this chapter: first, the end of the still wholly pagan art of the Catacombs, from which the severity of the Church, at last free to exercise her authority, had banished all trace of antique feeling; secondly, the separation of the Eastern and Western Empires, on the one



PANORAMA OF FLORENCE FROM BELLOSGUARDO



MADONNA WITH THE INFANT JESUS (CIMABUE)
In the Church of Santa Maria Novella

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hand creating Byzantine mysticism and on the other causing the almost complete suppression of Latin art, which the Popes and the Council of Nicea reduced to a mere transcription of dogmas and limited to mosaic. After the Peace of Constance, the Latin spirit, encouraged by the Dominicans, by the Franciscans, and by the Universities, begins to struggle both against the ritual and against the arid symbolism of Byzantium, and gropes towards the expression of natural life. Yet another hundred and fifty years and the artists arrive at that conception of art which we still accept to-day,—the recognition of their corporate organization, of their moral personality set free from the rigorous control of the priests. It is the foreshadowing of the fusion of Catholicism and the antique, the awakening of Latin Italy casting off the obstruction of Byzantium. To arrive at this immense efforts were needed; checks, contradictions, a blind and painful process of gestation.

It is not at Florence that the great story first opens; it is at Pisa with Niccolo Pisano in 1250, at Rome with the Cosmati, at Siena with Ugolino and Duccio. But, nevertheless, it is really Cimabue (1240-1302) from whom we must date the true beginning of the marvellous destinies of Italian Art. He was not the only originator, but he was the most decisive one. In 1267 they carried to Santa Maria Novella in triumphal procession the Madonna he had painted for this church. This work is the first true Italian picture.

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This date is the first true date in art. From this picture and from this date everything came, and came through Florence. For three hundred and fifty years she was to continue to be the creation and inspiration of all Italy.

Nine years after the ceremony of the installation of Cimabue's Madonna in S. Maria Novella a child was born at Vespignano, close to Florence, whom, according to legend, Cimabue was one day to discover drawing on a stone one of the goats of his flock. Cimabue carried off the little shepherd and taught him. His name was Ambrogio di Bondone, called Ambrogiotto, or Giotto for short. In 1296, when he was twenty, the pupil, while continuing his master's paintings in the Church of Assisi, broke deliberately with the formalism of the Byzantines, from which the old Cimabue had already timidly drawn away, and showed himself as one of those liberating geniuses in whom the aspirations of a race are suddenly crystallized. Architect, painter, sculptor, he worked for forty years, not only creating but inspiring enthusiasm everywhere, the veritable founder and prophet of a new religion. In 1298, at Rome, he decorated the apse of S. Peter's; in 1300 the Church of S. John Lateran; in 1301 the palace of the Podestà at Florence; in 1303 he was at Padua, where the exiled Dante came to him, and whence they departed together for Verona, Ferrara, Ravenna. Pisa, Arezzo, Milan, Urbino, Rome, Naples—he visited them all. Then he returned to Florence, to design the Campanile

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and model its ornaments. He saw the first stones laid before he died on January 8, 1337.

The chief mark of genius in this extraordinary man is his love of life and worship of nature, carried by the sheer force of his nature to a point which no one has surpassed. Perhaps there exists no other example of such superb decision in entering an unknown domain. Evidently the Cosmati, Duccio, Cimabue, and on parallel lines the French carvers of images, had foreseen this promised land; but it was Giotto who broke his way into it, reinventing the antique, uniting it again to religion, making himself, by the tenderness and energy of his genius, the equal of S. Francis of Assisi. It is, above all, at Assisi that we must see him. There, in that series of twenty-eight compositions, he has identified himself with the saint whose life he was portraying. It is the first time that a painter has drawn scenes almost of his own time on the principle of direct observation magnified by sentiment. Twelve years later he returned to this same church and added the four compositions of the Triumph of Chastity, the Triumph of Poverty, the Triumph of Obedience, and the Glorification of S. Francis: models of synthetic art and decorative symbolism, joined to the vitality of sincerest realism. The Arena Chapel at Padua still shows one of Giotto's most important works. He decorated it entirely with cameos and scenes representing the Virtues, the Vices, the Annunciation, the Life of Jesus, the Life of the Virgin. In Florence the frescoes in

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S. Croce have escaped destruction (Life of the two Saints John, a repetition, with still more lovely variations, of the Life of S. Francis). All this shows a supreme simplicity, a profound emotion, an inexhaustible ingenuity of invention. A new world reveals itself. Through the daring insight of Giotto old Cimabue's dream takes shape, the soul of the painters of the Christian crypts revives, the antique, with its pure draperies, reappears in Florentine guise, Nature in all her truth returns in triumph to Art after ten centuries of exile. The subtle and strong thought of Dante is united to the tender imagination of his friend. Giotto performed joyously, as if it had been a pastime, this work, immense enough to fill ten lives. John Sebastian Bach is perhaps the only other man who, in another art, was able to accomplish an equally vast work with the same fire, good humour, and ease. It is said of Bach that he built cathedrals of music. Giotto built cathedrals of painting. Like Bach, he had none of the asceticism of a mystic ; he was gay, active, given to witty speeches, full of practical good sense, gifted with an imperturbable will. It may be said that not only is his work in itself admirable—for its faults are always due to an excess of feeling—but that even if all his work had disappeared he should still be venerated as one of the great discoverers in the history of the human mind. Out of nothingness Giotto called up—like a Pallas issuing fully armed from his brain—a conception of pictorial art which is the noblest conception yet formed : that of an art at



VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH ANGELS (GIOTTO)
Uffizi Gallery



VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH ANGELS (FRA ANGELICO)
Museo di San Marco

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once idealistic and human, a translation of spiritual experience into plastic form, using design and colour only to make visible states of the soul. For two hundred years after him this conception prevailed ; then the decadence began, the painter with no depth of mind sought to be admired for his skill, the "joy of painting" substituted the sensuous for the ideal, and, in spite of prodigies of technique, and certain glorious exceptions, the secret of old Giotto's inspiration was lost.

Giotto had been for a hundred years a creative and inspiring force ; one might have believed that he had found technical perfection. His example caused an absolute revolution. He had offered an instrument of truth and life to Latin thought. Byzantine formalism was cast out for ever from Italian soil ; the future was with Christian art, and there was so much to be said that had waited so long for utterance. To substitute for hieratic formula the free expression of nature ; to explore the infinite domain of true representation ; to continue, nevertheless, to make painting not only the recorder of sacred legends, and of the heroic struggle of Christianity, but also to impart the moral lessons of the faith through the eyes of the unlettered faithful—what a task was here, and what mere loss of time it seemed to dream of refining on the design by subtleties of perspective or of colour ! The art of Giotto said all it wished to say. An exquisite invention turned to grace the arbitrary shortcomings of his realism, for with him the feeling was everything. In

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Giotto's train, through the luminous opening he had broached, his disciples came on.

No one had been jealous of the great discoverer, none had opposed him. Even the pupils of Andrea Tafi, the worker in mosaic who was contemporary with Cimabue and still clung to Byzantinism, even Buffalmaco and Bruno di Giovanni had hailed him without envy. It was the son of Tafi's collaborator, Taddeo Gaddi (1300-1366), who was Giotto's best assistant and completer of his work, and who, excellent artist as he was, abstained from shining on his own account in order to be the humble propagator of the master's doctrines and his over-modest copier (completion of the Florence Campanile; construction of the Ponte Vecchio; frescoes which have now disappeared at Naples, Arezzo, Pisa; altar-piece at Siena). Giovanni da Milano, Stefano, Puccio Capanna (nothing by the first two is left to us; a fresco by the last named exists in the Church of Assisi) were also among the immediate pupils of Giotto. Then came Agnolo Gaddi (1343-1346), at once a brilliant fresco-painter and the opulent founder of a family of bankers, gathering round him to help in carrying out his commissions, numerous disciples who propagated the Giottesque faith. Notable among them is Cennino Cennini, the author of the celebrated "*Libro dell' Arte*," a precious document on the æsthetic and the technique of this school. Giotto's son (1342-1368), author of a most moving Descent from the Cross in the Uffizi, was a learned and solitary mystic whose death was due as much

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to overwork as to consumption. But the greatest of Giotto's followers was Andrea di Cione, called l' Orcagna (1308-1368).

Architect, painter, and sculptor—for, like all the other Trecento masters, he made no separation between these arts—Orcagna has not survived for us through his works. His vast frescoes in S. Maria Novella were destroyed in the fifteenth century to make way for those of Ghirlandajo; but this church still shows in the Strozzi Chapel the high worth of this encyclopædic mind, already reaching out to the conception of which Leonardo and Michelangelo were one day to give the final synthesis. There is made visible the desire for beauty of form, over and above its expression, and on the strength of such a work as this it was possible for long to attribute to Orcagna the sublime frescoes of the Triumph of Death in the Campo Santo of Pisa. At Florence, Andrea da Firenze and Daddi; at Pisa, Traini; at Volterra, Francesco da Volterra; at Arezzo, Spinelli—all these were still Giotto's followers, and up to the threshold of the Renaissance they preserved the tradition. Siena kept aloof. But everywhere else the genius of Giotto established through his apostles not only a school but what one may call the moral ascendancy of the artist. In 787 the Council of Nicea had indeed admitted that painting was of great utility in offering an edifying example by means of pictures, but on the express condition that “edification by means of pictures shall obey the laws and the tradition approved by the Church,

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the practical part alone being the concern of the painter, the tradition coming from the order and intention of the Holy Father.” It is against such a decision that the struggle was carried on from Giotto to Lippi. It would have thrust art back into a darkness deep as that of the Catacombs ; and on this account the Council of Nicea is one of the outstanding facts in the evolution of Christian art.

Owing to Giotto's efforts this decision was annulled, and the painter was no longer a mere workman subject to the mind of the priest. “ By the grace of God we are those who show forth to homely and unlettered men the marvellous things wrought by and in the power of the holy faith.” This formula was inscribed at the head of the Statutes of the Corporation of the Sienese Painters. Would that these proud words were inscribed on the threshold of our *salons* ! What emulation, what remorse, would they not cause ! Putting aside the theological question, this phrase is still the formula of Art itself. The truth must not be forgotten : it was Giotto who made possible this realization of the respect due to the artist and of his liberty, destined to grow until it caused Julius II to bow before Michelangelo, Francis I before Leonardo, and Charles V before Titian.

Yet other monuments have borne witness to the moral and artistic greatness attained by such a man, even though they have been continually destroyed and replaced by the magnificent insouciance of a race conscious of inexhaustible creative

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power. We do not know the authors of the splendid frescoes of the Spanish Chapel in S. Maria Novella : the S. Peter Walking on the Water, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant, the Triumph of S. Thomas Aquinas. We do not know the authors of the Triumph of Death, the Last Judgment, the Hell, in the Campo Santo of Pisa. But without Giotto they would never have existed. Everywhere in Italy his quickening, all-embracing spirit shines forth, inspires, opens up new ways : in Umbria it is Guido Palmerucci of Gubbio and Nuzi of Fabriano. The frescoes of S. Chiara and of the Incoronata at Naples, if they are not by Giotto, are inspired by him. At Bologna, Franco, Vitale, Dalmasio, Simone de Crocefissi, and many others are only pale reflections of him. Tommaso and Barnabo da Modena are "Giotteschi." If Venice resists this influence, at Padua, close at hand, Altichiero da Zevio and Jacopo d' Avanzo are subject to it, the Carrara encourage Giottesque art in this town where Guariento still represents it just as Turone and Stafano da Zevio do at Verona. As the influence of Bach was universally supreme in the forms of the sonata and the symphony for a hundred years, so did the genius of Giotto provoke a wave of naturalistic idealism and fling it, a-sparkle with life, on all the sacred walls of Italy. He is the supreme Master of Expressiveness, the Awakener of Art—by the grace of his faith, the purity of his heart, and the power of his spirit—from a sleep of ages.

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This effort, one of the most generous that human consciousness has ever made, was not to prove sufficient. The intoxication of creation had led the Giotteschi through a hundred years of dizzy production, to occupy themselves only with poetry and imagination, to invent and not lose time in perfecting their technique. The ideal subject-matter which they accumulated was enough to provide for the whole of the new century. But their technique, passing from hand to hand unmodified, wore out and became a hackneyed formula. These innocents with their charming *naïveté* forgot that painting, the swift recording of their mystical dreams and visions of nature, has a material side. The School of Giotto had thus to undergo a transformation and disappear; to close behind it the doors which it had opened would have been to shut itself into a tomb. The epoch was drawn into a rushing current of social, literary, political ideas; everything was changing, fermenting. How, then, could a technique of expression become fixed without becoming corrupted? The soul was there always as a model, but the instrument no longer sufficed.

Italy at the end of the fourteenth century was no longer Giotto's Italy. The Popes were at Avignon; and the Italian States, distracted by tyranny or anarchy, tired of the Popes as of the Emperors, thought of nothing but money, indispensable for warfare as for the delights of life, or an arrogant intellectualism. Intelligence reacted against foreign usurpation or the harshness of

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dogma ; it manifested itself also as a means of ruling over the minds of the masses by a magnificence of art and letters. This was the secret of the able rule of the Medici. Humanism re-animated the antique, encouraged budding scepticism ; minds were magnetized by curiosity of research in history and in nature, under its double aspect of science and of art, and in spite of the ecclesiastical rod, Paganism haunted souls in the warm land where it had triumphed for so long. Irreligion returned under the mask of beauty. The first consequence of such a moral crisis was to be the passionate worship of form, the consciousness of the technical inadequacy of the great Giottesque movement, the need of the enjoyment which results from the perfecting of the material for its own sake. More study was imperative. At the same time it was realized that, however great the genius of Giotto, it was no longer possible that a single technique, followed with subservience and quasi-indifference, the idea being alone important, could suffice for the whole of Italy ; for, in each different region, the study of nature was leading artists to let themselves be influenced by their native scenery, by their own customs and types. From this sprang the formation of schools. Scientific research in the nineteenth century offers a like example : if, formerly, it was possible to conceive of " Science " because the limitation of knowledge allowed a single powerful and synthetic brain the power to include it all, the substitution of experimental methods for

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hypothesis of a metaphysical character has suddenly brought about such a division of work that "Science" is no longer possible and that we have instead "sciences" beyond the grasp of any single expert's brain.

In like manner the outburst of curiosity in the fourteenth century necessitated the dissolution of the Giottesque unity, and established the different schools. To tell the truth, just as scientists frequently intrude into each other's domain, so did the Quattrocentisti constantly exchange conceptions. But there was an end of subservience to a strict ideal, and each creator followed his own genius.

Thus all pictorial art in the fourteenth century, while always considering the faith and its setting forth as a subject of chief importance, becomes a study in technique, for which this subject-matter was to become more and more the pretext and no longer the ultimate end. In this way the conception of modern art was formed.

But the craving of the Quattrocentisti for truth, for rigorous analysis, in no way corresponds to our realism; in their thoughts Art and Beauty take their place by the side of a mystic idealism, without displacing it; on the contrary, they would serve it more passionately than before; and if these admirable technicians are, owing to their comprehensive education as modellers, decorators, goldsmiths, and architects, marvellous portrait-painters, they have never imagined that portraiture can be isolated from symbolical composition, while our naturalism has reached the point of

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completely forgetting this. The Quattrocentisti are quite as fervent idealists as the Giottesques ; but, owing to the natural evolution of the century, they set themselves far more complex technical problems, and they solve them in order to prepare the way for still greater ventures in the future.

It is only after their time that the resurrection of Paganism and the decadence of faith were to give technique so excessive an importance and seductiveness that extreme virtuosity supplanted the symbol and the pure idea, and that the merits of the craftsman usurped the divine homage due to inspiration. Born of religion and for her service, Christian Art has, like religion, her three Churches. From the fourth to the thirteenth century Art is meditative and suffering ; Giotto creates Art Militant, which the Quattrocentisti continue, and Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael found the Church of Art Triumphant.

The first man to embody a hint of this evolution, on the threshold of the fourteenth century, was Starnina, a pupil of Antonio Veneziano (frescoes in the Cathedral at Prato). But the new age was really inaugurated by two very great artists—Gentile da Fabriano (1370–1450) and Vittore Pisano, called Pisanello (1380–1456), who were not born at Florence, but who drew from her the inspiration which they afterwards spread abroad in Umbria and in Venetia. Gentile worked at Brescia, at Venice (in the ducal palace with Jacopo Bellini), then at Florence about 1425, at Siena, at Orvieto, and last at Rome. His life was a happy

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one ; he was an artist of luxurious charm and lively grace, mixing gold with his colours and drawing with delightful elegance. The Adoration of the Magi, which is in the Accademia at Florence, bears witness to what must have been the beauty of his lost works ; it is one of the purest jewels of Italian art. Gentile is the immediate forerunner of Gozzoli and Fra Angelico. In Venice and Rome he had as fellow-worker Pisanello of Verona ; his work, too, has almost entirely disappeared, and we should have little means of judging him were it not for his drawings and his medals, the finest ever made since antiquity. Architect, engraver, painter of animals, of portraits, of fresco, Pisanello is, like Orcagna or Giotto, one of those universal minds of whom this magical period bequeathed the example to the men of the Renaissance. With him the hieratic simplicity and ingenuousness of Giotto definitely give place to the perfection of living form, and future centuries will carry it no farther.

One of the masters of this powerful and admirable artist had been a monk of Camaldoli, Lorenzo Monaco (1370-1423), miniaturist and painter, so perfectly representative of this period of transition that it is possible to mistake his early work for that of Gaddi and his latest for that of another monk, a Dominican called Guido di Pietro, his collaborator, who was also the friend of Gentile. This Guido di Pietro was no other than the splendid artist beautified by the Church under the name of Fra Giovanni da Fiesole and venerated by the

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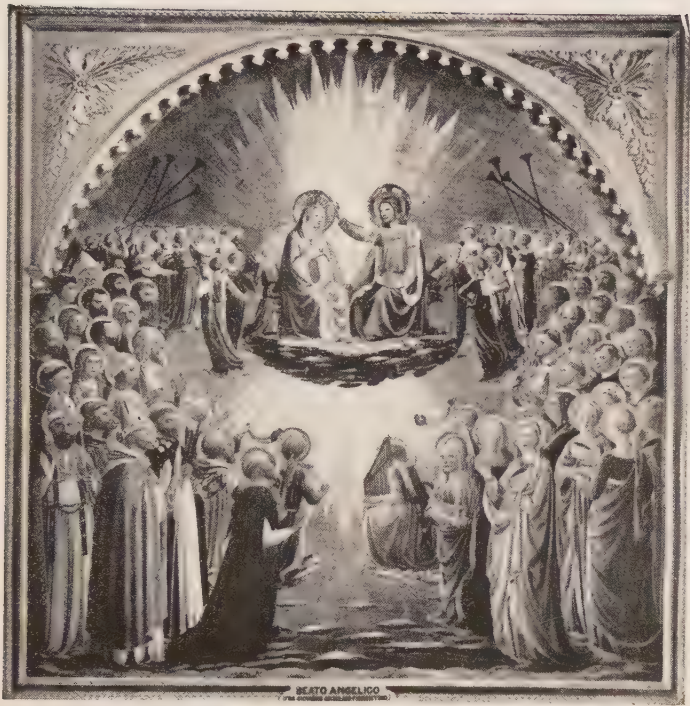
whole world under that of Fra Angelico (1387-1455). A pupil of Starnina, he became a Dominican monk at the age of twenty in the monastery of Fiesole, close to Florence; followed his brothers into an exile which lasted five years at Foligno in Umbria, then at Cortona; returned to Fiesole and so to Florence; at sixty he went to decorate a chapel in the Cathedral of Orvieto; was called to Rome by Martin V in order to work in the Vatican, and then died.

The man was in the nobility of his soul and the sweetness of his ways a spiritual son of S. Francis of Assisi; the artist, in the purity of his style and the marvellous freshness of his imagination, was the reincarnation of Giotto. Between them, Giotto and Fra Angelico have given incomparable expression to the religious ideal of the Middle Ages—in its candour, its fervour, its ecstasy, its heroic spirituality—at the moment before it disappeared. They are its two great representative geniuses. But Fra Angelico has profited by the evolution which has been accomplished; the Dominican has the better of the Shepherd, not in greatness of soul or power of invention, but in unhampered truthfulness of form and a richness of colouring, the translucency of which is such that the most recent researches into the effects of atmosphere, from Claude Lorraine to Turner or to Claude Monet, have not surpassed its subtlety, its brilliance, and its radiant power. During the course of his long life the pious hermit modified and enlarged his manner, sensitive to the efforts of realism,

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influenced by Masolino and Masaccio, who grew up at his side, but being unable to study the nude, he confined himself to the study of faces, and through them expressed everything with a unique, an undefinable charm—a charm like Raphael's, later on, which is due to the magic power of a soul shining through its fleshly mask. Fra Giovanni is the continuation of Giotto ; like him, he has an infinite variety of decorative invention, yet remains faithful to one central conception. His innumerable personages exist only in a state of ecstasy, between heaven and earth. They must be seen, above all, in the monastery of S. Marco at Florence, peopled by him with a world of angelic figures, a masterpiece of Christian art. The chapel of Nicolas V in the Vatican (Lives of S. Stephen and S. Laurence) shows the struggle between his faith and his desire to observe. The Louvre possesses one of his masterpieces, the Coronation of the Virgin, and many others are in the Uffizi, notably the Virgin Surrounded by Angels. But the principal museums of the world pride themselves on paintings by his hand, tinted azure and rose-colour, of a radiant and fervent purity. Destiny has protected the work of the saint of Fiesole, and has bequeathed it to the future as one of the most splendid examples of the height to which a feeling for things divine can exalt the human soul.

The work of Fra Angelico unfolded its beauty, side by side with the movement towards nature, for this rather than “naturalism” is what characterizes the century. Not only was the study of



THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN (FRA ANGELICO)
Museo di San Marco

STEPHEN
COLUMBIA, MD.



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humanism to transform painting but also a material circumstance, a purely technical invention, was to produce and create a real revolution ; this was the process of painting in oils. It was known in the time of Giotto, but never used, owing to the slowness with which it dried. The two processes which were dear to the Italians were tempera painting (with white of egg or glue) applied to panels made of dry wood or coated with gesso, and painting *a buon fresco* executed on a plaster of wet lime with pure, tempered colours. On the wall to be decorated so much surface was got ready as the artist could be sure of covering in a single day. The paint had to be put on rapidly while the surface was wet, and retouching was impossible. The enormous difficulty of such a technique was a subject of pride among artists, who gave to mural painting the first place in the mastery of their profession. The easel-picture was, however, always held in honour ; Fra Angelico had made masterpieces before he touched fresco painting, but this remained the supreme means of expression. The difficulty of the quick-drying pigment, which ruled out retouching, had in the end become so dear to these admirable craftsmen that the slow-drying oil paint which permitted retouching repelled them. From this sprang their fecundity and rapid invention, to which they sacrificed the scrupulous and exact study of what we call detail. But the Van Eycks, by inventing a drying medium for oil painting, of which the process and technical examples were quickly

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imported into Italy by commercial routes, determined, from 1420 onwards, an immense stream of opinion ; people were amazed by the brilliancy of the colouring and the delicacy of modelling obtained by this new process ; neither fresco nor tempera painting could compete with it, and the freedom to retouch indefinitely promised a far greater realization of detail. The art of analysis, of investigation, of form, had found its final instrument.

Certainly, oil painting—that is to say, with the use of the drying medium and on canvas—did not immediately dethrone the use of the egg or glue, or of distemper on wood or fresh plaster, but from this moment the panel began to be the rival of the fresco, and even mural decoration itself was on the way to becoming only a vast panel-picture applied to a wall. The generation contemporary with Fra Angelico still had respect for the principle of fresco painting. If it used linseed oil it was only as the Giottesques used it, as a sort of distemper on plaster. Domenico Veneziano was one of the first to work in this manner, then Masolino de Panicale (1383–1440). The point must be emphasized : the process of fresco, like tempera with white of egg or size, allowed, if one may say so, nothing more than coloured designs, like tinted water-colours, without depth of substance. Line was the essential framework which was visible everywhere in it, and colour was juxtaposed in flat washes or in streaks by hatching like that of a pencil of hard chalk. Oil painting on canvas,

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with retouching, such as has been used since the sixteenth century, is alone in allowing impasto and, progressively, the disappearance of the line beneath the colouring matter, until we arrive at the total negation of all drawing in the strict sense of the word, as in the works of the Impressionists, where everything is suggested, forms and planes alike, by the contrast of coloured planes. This difference of technique was to engender a special conception, a new mentality in the painter ; what we understand by this term would have been unintelligible at all points, even detestable, for a Giottesque painter or even for a disciple of Fra Angelico.

Masolino, like the monk of Fiesole, a pupil of Starnina (frescoes at S. Clemente at Rome in 1418 ; Brancacci Chapel at Florence ; Church of Castiglione d' Olona, close to Milan), is distinguished by his rather effeminate grace and by his serious study of antique draperies and above all of the nude, which men now began to dare to introduce into religious art. But Masaccio (1402-1428) surpassed him by the full flight of his genius. He was a gentle being, absent-minded, peculiar, very poor, little appreciated, wrapt up in his dream. A pupil of Masolino, he was entrusted by him on his departure for Hungary with the task of finishing the Brancacci Chapel (Church of the Carmine, Florence). It is the only work of his that we know, and even this he was not able to finish : he left suddenly for Rome, perhaps to fly from his creditors, and died there. But his

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frescoes—the Baptism of S. Peter, the Tribute Money, S. Peter Raising a Child from the Dead, S. Peter Giving Alms—are enough to make him immortal, to make him, more than Orcagna, than Gentile, than Pisanello himself, the pioneer of a new epoch of art. Masaccio is the first great painter of the sacred and heroic nude; he is a realist who models like a great sculptor; he composes with superb amplitude and life; all he does is strong, powerful, and so simple that one does not think of his science. This young man, inspired and unrecognized, who died in poverty at twenty-six, is one of the finest masters of Italy; he welded together by a stroke of genius all her still confused aspirations. He was born and died during the lifetime of Fra Angelico, and prepared the way for his successors, who often came to that unfinished chapel to seek incomparable lessons.

Chiaroscuro, modelling, perspective, the deliberate introduction of representation of fact, whether beautiful or sordid, in art—all this is due to Masaccio, for whom observation and tragic composition are the artist's supreme aim. Two men, stronger in design than in colour, follow resolutely in his steps; two rugged, sincere, powerful artists. One of them, Paolo di Dono (1397–1475), whose love of birds got him the name of Uccello, a pupil in painting of Antonio Veneziano, and in goldsmith's work of Ghiberti, with whom he worked on the baptistery doors, is a mathematician and an architect as much as a painter. He is absorbed in the complexity of perspective and the inter-

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relation of lines ; he paints confused cavalcades, dark and powerful battle-pieces (Uffizi, Louvre) the Flood and the Sacrifice of Noah (cloister of S. Maria Novella, Florence). He is no mystic, he is a naturalist, a scientist. He died in misery, driven mad, it is said, by his researches in geometry. Uccello is a sketch for a Tintoret or a Leonardo, an austere, violent, fascinating figure, in advance of his time, one whose dream was a synthetic universality. No less rugged a figure is Andrea del Castagno (1390-1457), a rough peasant by birth, an austere draughtsman, a violent realist with a love of emaciated figures. He created a Colleoni in painting with his grand equestrian figure of Niccola da Tolentino in the Cathedral of Florence ; its carriage is superb. Important in another way is Fra Filippo Lippi (1406-1469). The poor son of a butcher, received out of charity into the Carmine Convent, he became a monk there at fifteen ; watched Masolino and Masaccio at work in the Brancacci Chapel ; began to decorate a cloister in 1431 ; then ran away, and in 1456 carried off from her convent at Prato the young nun Lucrezia Buti, by whom he had a son. Through the intervention of Cosimo de' Medici the two culprits were freed from their vows and were able to marry. Lippi lived in poverty and died at Spoleto.

Lippi was an admirable artist, and, above all, an innovator. On the technical side, he completed the evolution of the panel-picture by his idea of replacing the triptych, which formed part of a vast architectural scheme, by the picture in a round

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frame, which could be transported easily into private houses. Æsthetically, his realism was carried so far as to depart from the conventional uniformity of the divine type, to represent Madonnas with the features of mortal virgins and mothers borrowed from real life. Lippi was a bad monk, but he was a great poet, passionate, expansive, lyrical, full of infectious charm, of sensuous, frank delight, which was no longer the naïve ecstasy of the Trecentisti.

We have many of his delightful pictures (Uffizi and Pitti in Florence, Glorification of the Virgin in the Louvre), but it is, above all, in his frescoes at Prato and Spoleto that it is possible to judge of his worth : particularly at Prato, for there one sees his celebrated Herod's Feast, in which Salome has found one of her most surprising incarnations. Brilliant colouring, exquisiteness of form, an intense vitality and humanity, make of Filippo Lippi the genius who should succeed Masaccio with a less haughty soul but with a flexibility and a sumptuousness which presage the extraordinary blossoming of the sixteenth century. If Gentile and Fra Angelico carry on the Giotto tradition, Pisanello, Masaccio, and Lippi are the three masters who make the work of Botticelli, Ghirlandajo, and later of Leonardo possible. Florence possesses the most important evidences of this revolution : the Brancacci Chapel, the Spanish Chapel, the Riccardi Palace, the monastery of S. Marco are the Holy Places of this Crusade of Beauty.

CHAPTER III

FLORENTINE PAINTING FROM FILIPPO LIPPI TO THE DECADENCE

FRA ANGELICO trained but one immediate pupil ; but it was reserved for this pupil to carry on, right up to the threshold of the sixteenth century, the tradition of ecstatic idealism, while bringing to it even more vivacity and imaginative charm. Benozzo Gozzoli (1420-1497) is yet another of those artists whose fecundity, whose unfailing beauty of inspiration, amaze the mind. In the midst of artists who, from Masaccio onwards, were more and more haunted by the desire for perfection of technique, Gozzoli, the last of the followers of Giotto, remained preoccupied, above all, with feeling ; yet that does not prevent this draughtsman, though at times careless and inaccurate, from being the greatest decorative landscape painter of his century and the creator of tenderness and emotion. He was a simple, poor man ; he enjoyed no favour and was ill-paid for his work. Fra Angelico had trained him, and took him to Rome and Orvieto ; in 1449 they separated. In 1450 he decorated the Church of S. Fortunato at Montefalco ; he painted at S. Francesco a Life of S. Francis in twelve scenes ; and in 1457 Piero de' Medici gave him a commission

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to decorate the chapel of the Riccardi Palace at Florence. There the genius of Gozzoli shines out in those choirs of angels worthy of Fra Angelico, and in that Procession of the Magi, which is perhaps the most sumptuous work which the generation of the Cinquecentisti has created.

In 1463 Gozzoli was commissioned to paint seventeen frescoes in the Church of S. Agostino at S. Gimignano, and finished them in three years (Life of S. Augustine). Then, in 1468, he undertook twenty-two compositions in the Campo Santo of Pisa. Like Giotto, he "built cathedrals in painting." In this sublime spot, to which he came perhaps after Orcagna and the Lorenzetti, after Antonio Veneziano, after Spinelli, after that terrible masterpiece the Triumph of Death, Benozzo spent fifteen years creating the Life of Noah. Here, after nine centuries, the pagan decorations of the Catacombs live again in all their exquisite artlessness—the Patriarchs, the Combat of David and Goliath, the Queen of Sheba. Here is the supreme proof of his inexhaustible power of episodic invention, of his sense of great masses, of his science in setting figures in a landscape, of the strange exactness of his observation, and, above all, of the adorable quality of his soul. This gigantic work won for the old, tired-out Gozzoli a peaceful end after long obscurity. The enthusiastic people of Pisa wished him to rest beside his work: they built a tomb for him in their Campo Santo.

This extraordinary man had his disciples. The

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only one who need be remembered is Cosimo Rosselli (1439-1507). He sums up—with undeniable qualities but without greatness and without originality—the whole of the evolution from Giotto to the Cinquecentisti (frescoes in the Annunziata and at S. Ambrogio, pictures in the Accademia at Florence, Biblical frescoes in the Chapel of Sixtus IV at Rome). And it is perhaps well to note here that when studying Italian art, and one speaks of a painter of quite secondary importance, it is still a question of a fresco-painter, a colourist, a man of intellect, a producer, a master of technique, such as we may look for in vain in our exhibitions. Comprehension of a time such as this by a modern mind can only be attained if we constantly remember the proportion to be kept between the members of our *salons* whom we cover with easy praises and those men of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries who rose up in their hundreds to create lovely things in such abundance that the mind, first enraptured, then sated with admiration, turns away in the end and cries for mercy. The least of those at whom we no longer trouble to look would be acknowledged to-day as an artist of the first rank.

The parallel between the idealists, whose line was so gloriously prolonged by Gozzoli, and the students of nature and technicians (so far, let us say once more, as one can have recourse to this artificial parallel between artists who constantly influenced each other and who formed part of the same movement)—this parallel is carried on in

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the works of Giuliano Pesello (1367-1446) and of his grandson, Pesellino (born in 1422). They worked together, studied painting in oil and varnishes, imitated Andrea del Castagno and Lippi, and carried animal study so far as to keep a menagerie in Florence. Baldovinetti, too (1427-1499), was an experimenter—a chemist, a maker of mosaics—almost none of whose work now remains. The brothers Pollaiuoli (Antonio, 1429-1498; Piero, 1443-1496), born at Florence and dying in Rome, were very fine realistic artists. Antonio exhibits all his power in the Saint Sebastian in the National Gallery, where his strong style is seen in its intensity. It is the first painting in which we notice the oil glazes which were actually to mark the decisive triumph of the technique created by the Van Eycks. Piero (Coronation of the Virgin, Church of S. Gimignano) had less energy and more grace. Goldsmiths and sculptors, the Pollaiuoli were among the most robust workers who helped in the evolution of the Cinquecentisti. The fresco is sacrificed to the easel-picture, breadth of conception to execution of detail, feeling to technical study, spirituality to a vigorous and very virile realism.

This group of painters, closely allied to sculpture and goldsmiths' work, performed, in the main, alongside of the imaginative extemporizers, the same less striking but most useful part that Pisanello, Andrea del Castagno and Uccello played before them. But no one of them assumes this part with so much authority as Andrea del Verrocchio,

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whom we must again designate as one of those leading figures that a whole generation obeys.

Andrea del Verrocchio (1435-1488) is, above all, a sculptor, the heir of Donatello, the immortal author of the Colleoni of Venice. He is a bronze-founder, a metal-chaser, a goldsmith, a mathematician, a musician even; he is a draughtsman far more than a painter. He is one of the artists of a blessed period when the fusion of the arts, which to-day is called chimerical, seemed to many people a natural thing. Verrocchio undertakes much and accomplishes little, because strength of imagination and the desire of perfection are at strife within him. But his drawings and his sketches set up a definite Florentine type and exercise the most profound influence over his time: Leonardo in all his power owns it. If the celebrated frieze of Fighting Men has disappeared, a work in the Accademia at Florence—the Baptism of Christ—is enough to show us the worth as a colourist and as a painter of expression of the grandiose modeller of the Colleoni. In his studio Leonardo and Perugino had their training; and later Lorenzo di Credi, who only needed a little more scrupulousness and fidelity to his master to make him, too, a great master. As a colourist somewhat cold, but a learned draughtsman, with a touching strain of mystical exaltation and a subtle poet, he created very fine things at once tender and full of style (The Virgin between S. Nicholas and S. Julian at the Louvre, the Virgin between Zenobius and S. John the Baptist in the Duomo at

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Pistoia, the Adoration of the Shepherds in the Accademia at Florence, Virgins and Child Christs in many museums, admirable drawings—among them one masterpiece, the portrait of Verrocchio in the Uffizi). Lorenzo di Credi dared not take sides strongly either with or against his master and the movement of his time. A sincerely religious man, he was so far influenced by the austere reaction of Savonarola as to burn his profane compositions, but not so far as to regain the sentiment of a Gentile, towards which, perhaps, his secret genius would have led him. He was, to sum him up, the last of the Florentine Quattrocentisti.

Although Botticelli, Filippino Lippi, and Domenico Ghirlandajo had in fact died before him and their lives had reached less far into the sixteenth century, they, rather than Lorenzo di Credi, may be counted among the forerunners of the art of the sixteenth century. Sandro di Mariano Filipepi called Botticelli (1447-1508), the son of a goldsmith, the pupil of Filippo Lippi, was both Christian and pagan in his strange and subtle soul, and brought into Italian art a^p dreamy melancholy unknown before him. But one cannot protest too strongly against the almost ludicrous interpretation which of late has treated the art of this great master as an example of I know not what perverse and decadent mannerism. If this noble and profound spirit was equally attracted by sacred and profane beauty, so that he gives his saints all the grace of the antique

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and his naked goddesses a Christian chastity ; if he did not scruple to bend, to lengthen, to contort his figures with violent movement in order to express dramatic passion ; if he was haunted by psychology to the extent of painting countenances the complexity and ambiguity of whose looks have been equalled perhaps by Leonardo alone ; if he was incisive and complex to an unbelievable degree—Botticelli was always healthy, strong, and powerful, free from all petty malice, and above all from that “ perversity ” so falsely imputed to him. His serious grace, his mysterious expression, the invincible attraction of his irregular and pensive faces, are perhaps what answers best to those feelings which the expression “ Florentine art ” magically arouses in us ; he is the very type of the patrician. But everything in him is the work of a very great genius, far removed from all “ decadence.” His output is considerable : a great number of easel-pictures, the Adoration of the Magi in the Uffizi, the Assumption in the National Gallery, the Madonna of the Louvre, the Coronation of the Virgin in the Accademia at Florence, on the one hand ; on the other, the mythological works now definitely admitted to art, since ecclesiastical severity had given way altogether before the irresistible pressure of the antique Renaissance : the Birth of Venus (Uffizi) and the Allegory of the Spring (Accademia)—those marvels of divine pale harmony, tender, pearly, immortal ; the Calumny of Apelles (Uffizi), three frescoes in the Sistine Chapel (Moses in Egypt, the Punish-

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ment of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, the Temptation of Christ), although less intimately representative of his genius give a fine idea of the power of his lively dramatic composition. They proudly maintain his rank between Signorelli and Ghirlandajo. The thirty-eight designs for the "Divina Commedia" (Berlin Museum) are of the purest beauty. He, too, like Lorenzo di Credi, was an enthusiast for Savonarola, and never recovered from the martyr's death. Botticelli had been the pupil of Filippo Lippi; he became the master of his son Filippino Lippi (1457-1504) and his intimate friend. Filippino completed the Brancacci Chapel, which had remained as Masolino and Masaccio had left it in 1428. He painted in 1480 for the Church of the Badia the Vision of S. Bernard, frescoes on the Legend of S. Thomas Aquinas, in 1488, at Rome, and frescoes for S. Maria Novella in Florence (Legend of S. John the Apostle and S. Philip, Strozzi Chapel) stranger and less pure in style. Masaccio, Botticelli, Ghirlandajo, each in his different way influenced this artist of great intelligence and extreme delicacy who was troubled by a longing for the robust and the complex which did not suit his nature. Ghirlandajo especially, his junior, whose death, like his own, Botticelli was to witness, disturbed and distracted his conceptions and his dreams. To Ghirlandajo (1449-1494), in spite of the shortness of his life, was reserved the honour of closing the fifteenth century with masterpieces of more amplitude and authority than anything which had preceded them. It is

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as if all the efforts of realism and research, all the learned refinements of the Quattrocentisti reached their climax in Domenico Ghirlandajo, a master as robust as Masaccio, as inventive as Gozzoli, but less dry than the one and more restrained than the other. A pupil of Baldovinetti, from 1476 he was painting in Rome; in 1480, at Florence, he executed a S. Jerome and a Last Supper; in 1481 a wall-decoration in the Palazzo Vecchio; at Rome he worked in the Sistine Chapel (Vocation of S. Peter and S. Paul); the Legend of S. Fina at S. Gimignano just preceded the paintings in S. Trinita (Florence), followed by the decoration of the choir of S. Maria Novella. These are his most important works: the Life of S. Francis at S. Trinita; the Legends of the Virgin and of S. John the Baptist in S. Maria Novella covering over the ancient frescoes of Orcagna which time had faded. There the landscape painter, the constructor of grandiose buildings, the portraitist, the lyric poet, the painter of daily life deliberately mingling with his sacred persons all the bourgeoisie and all the aristocracy of Florence, are alike admirable in the frankness of their realism and the nobility of their style. After a hundred years' endeavour the two great rival tendencies meet in Ghirlandajo and inaugurate the new manner. He was, above all, a fresco-painter, and clung to the medium of distemper, great, sane, and prolific creator that he was, contemptuous of the easel-picture and its minutiae, although he has left us some wonderful things of the sort (Adoration

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of the Magi of the Uffizi and of the Spedale degli Innocenti). His brothers David and Benedetto and his brother-in-law Mainardi were only pale reflections of him ; like Piero di Cosimo (1462–1521), like Raffaellino del Garbo (1466–1524), they were artists of the second rank, too weak either to resist the new movement or to count for anything in it. Ghirlandajo began the sixteenth century, and he added to his other titles to honour that of being the master of Michelangelo. Verrocchio had been the master of Leonardo.

The natural son of a peasant girl and a notary, born in the small town of Vinci between Florence and Pisa in 1442, Leonardo entered Verrocchio's studio when he was eighteen. At twenty he was celebrated for his great beauty and the originality of his mind. His first works are all lost, with the exception of some drawings. The Annunciation of the Uffizi dates from 1472. The Uffizi Adoration of the Magi remains a sketch. The Virgin of the Rocks in the Louvre is one of the earliest great masterpieces of Leonardo. Painter, sculptor, architect, engineer, and musician, Leonardo left Florence at the age of thirty, in spite of the favour of Lorenzo de' Medici, to seek at Milan, under Lodovico Sforza, the means of attacking the great enterprises which his genius as artist and man of science had conceived, and which Sforza, determined to make Milan a triumphant rival of Florence, might offer him. Leonardo at this time was the type of ideal man, beautiful in person, witty, and omniscient—"Hermes and



THE BIRTH OF VENUS (BOTTICELLI)

STEPHENS
COLUMBIAN MUSEUM.



PRIMAVERA (BOTTICELLI)

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Promethus combined," in Lomazzo's phrase. He was received with enthusiasm in that brilliant Court whose festivals he took in hand ; but at the same time he was painting the Last Supper (refectory of the Convent S. Maria delle Grazie) his absolute masterpiece, now almost completely faded, in which the realism and idealism which had divided not only all Leonardo's predecessors but all artists and æsthetic critics ever since, are at last united in a perfect synthesis which annuls this opposition. For with Leonardo thought was the greatest human reality, expressed in actual bodily shapes, the form being nothing but the manifestation of the spirit to the eyes.

Leonardo worked for ten years on the Last Supper and, side by side with it, on a statue of Francesco Sforza ; but this was left unfinished and the model was destroyed. He painted the portraits of Cecilia Gallerani and Lucrezia Crivelli, Lodovico's mistresses ; of his wife Beatrice of Este ; made plans for the Cathedral of Pavia, for fortifications, for the canalization of the whole of Lombardy. In 1500 Lodovico was driven out of Milan and made prisoner by the French. Owing to these sudden political changes Leonardo was unable to complete any of the things for which he had prepared by such immense study. He went first to Venice, then to Florence, where he made the cartoon of S. Anne (Louvre). In 1502 he accompanied Cæsar Borgia to Urbino, Pesaro, Rimini, Ravenna, Imola, and made for him strategic plans of all Central Italy ; but

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Cæsar Borgia died suddenly soon after his brother, Pope Alexander VI, and Leonardo returned to Florence. He was given the decoration of the Council Hall of the Signoria, in rivalry with Michelangelo, who, as an ardent and austere patriot, hated him for his detachment as an artist and scholar superior to any sentiment of country.

Leonardo began the cartoon of the Battle of Anghiari, won by the Florentines against the Milanese, in 1440, but he never finished this work, except one episode, which has disappeared, and which we know only through some admirable drawings and notes. The sovereign portrait painter of patrician ladies and of Madonnas was also a master of animal subjects, and in crowded battle-scenes displayed a marvellous power. *La Gioconda* (*Monna Lisa*, the wife of *Zanobi del Giocondo*) dates back from 1505; in her life she offered to Leonardo a model who seemed created expressly to embody the synthesis of mysterious beauty of his dreams. Of his *Leda* only copies remain. The *Bacchus* of the Louvre dates from 1507. In 1506, discouraged by seeing that the coating which he had prepared on the wall for his Battle of Anghiari was going to do fatal harm to the picture he had already begun, Leonardo decided to abandon this work and to leave Florence, where he was hated and where he was tired out by the constant dissension. After a short stay in Milan, he was sent for by Louis XII, who had entered Milan after the victory of Agnadello, wasted his time in family lawsuits, saw France lose the

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Italy she had won after the death of Gaston de Foix at Ravenna, and went to Rome, where Giuliano de' Medici, the brother of Leo X, the successor of Julius II, invited him to settle. He was soon undeceived. The Pope's favour went to Michelangelo, his junior, and to the young Raphael. In 1515 François I, the victor of Marignan, had Leonardo presented to him, carried him away to France, and gave him the castle of Cloux, near Amboise, with a vast programme of work. The S. John the Baptist belongs to this time, and perhaps also the S. Anne, of which he had kept the cartoon. But toil, disappointment, and the wanderings of his old age had worn out this extraordinary being. The generous welcome of François I could only soften his end (May 2, 1519).

The few works which Fate has spared to us from the already restricted production of Leonardo are enough to make him one of the greatest geniuses of painting in all the ages, the most perfect, perhaps the most profound. But painting was only one of the preoccupations of this vast intellect, one of the applications of his method, from which it must not be separated. Leonardo was ambitious above all things, with a magnificent and melancholy pride, to himself the type incarnate of a superior humanity, and he never found a patron sufficiently powerful, sufficiently lofty to back him absolutely, without reserve of any kind, and to make him a sovereign of intellect realized in action. Such a meeting alone could have attached this fascinating

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and impenetrable being to any country, for his serene wisdom despised the petty quarrelling of the small nations. This hindrance gives his fruitful and lucid existence a sublime sadness and mystery. The examination of his manuscripts has shown that he was, before Bacon, a creator of experimental methods : physician, mechanician, astronomer, geologist, botanist, with theories on aviation, engineer, he was the forerunner of all modern science ; as æsthetic philosopher he has spoken with final authority in his "Treatise on Painting." Moralist and philosopher, both scientific and speculative, he is one of the great sovereigns of the human mind, like Leibniz, like Spinoza, like Goethe, not even conceiving divisions in the domain of the intellect, but embracing, penetrating, and expressing all things with the most rigorously mathematical mind and the most inspired poetical imagination—an imagination which soared above the traditional faith of Christian art and only retained its essential symbolism. Leonardo was, as in the conscious pride of his genius he wished to be, the Ideal Man in his harmonious completeness. An isolated pioneer, he was to die like Moses on the threshold of the Promised Land, of modern science ; unique in his power of divination, the passion for universal knowledge prevented him from realizing as much as he might have achieved. Had it been more abundant, his work would not have been finer and might have been equally lost to us, and we should not have had from an omniscient and superhuman Leonardo

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the lesson of his life, still more precious than the *S. Anne* and the *Gioconda*.

We have seen how from Giotto to Leonardo da Vinci the logical evolution of painting has proceeded along two parallel lines, which sometimes meet and which tend increasingly to combine ; on the one hand, the prolongation and enrichment of Giotto's allegorical idealism in the works of Orcagna, Gentile, Fra Angelico, Filippo Lippi, and Benozzo Gozzoli ; on the other, the subjection of mystical sentiment and imagination to the pursuit of realism, nature study and technique in the work of Pisanello, Uccello, Andrea del Castagno, Verrocchio ; while geniuses such as Masaccio, Botticelli, and Ghirlandajo may be looked upon as the chief meeting points between the two tendencies. Such was the course of Florentine art. Florence invented everything ; she decided the development of Umbrian and Lombard art ; Venetian art alone, born after her task was finished, escaped her influence. Thus she was in Italy the essential, the predestined city.

Let us repeat : such classifications, especially in so modest and summary an account, can only be allowed as being a means of simplification, and the reader should always picture this time as an absolute battle-field of fevered temperaments, endlessly seeking and finding, surpassing each other, influencing each other. The development of humanism, the more liberal dispositions of the Popes, the awakening of curiosity and of love for the antique, the realism of introducing living

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beings among the figures of a sacred tradition, the diffusion of portable pictures, the introduction of oil-painting—these are motives of evolution to which we must not forget to add one of the most essential, the enormous influence of sculptors on painters—the part played by Ghiberti, Luca della Robbia, Donatello, and architects like Brunelleschi, thanks to whom Florentine painting, and consequently almost all Italian painting, has never ceased to depend æsthetically on architecture and statuary in its principles of composition and of execution.

Beneath this artistic evolution a moral evolution was going on ; painting had at first been nothing but a trade of image-makers under the superintendence of the priests and possessing no right to make any work save by way of allegorical and ceremonial representation of religious history and dogmas. The moral personality of the artist, his independence, the right of his imagination, his corporate standing, his social influence, the authority of ideas—herein lies the secret work of the Trecentisti and above all of the Quattrocentisti, supported by the countenance of princes and before the world. This liberation was gradually accomplished, preparing the way for what in the sixteenth century may be called the separation of the artist and the Church. It was this which enabled art so gloriously to outlive a declining faith. While they made religious history and dogma their sole official theme, and thus kept themselves right with the Popes, whose strictness gave way little by little and very slowly—for

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Botticelli's Assumption nearly cost him the accusation of heresy—artists never ceased subtly to introduce into their single theme all the elements of modern art : landscape, the nude, portraiture, the psychology of all kinds of living beings, tragedy, pathos, passion, formal beauty. Thus when under the irresistible pressure of the resurrected Antique the Popes themselves, choosing rather to follow the stream than to be swept away by it, admitted the figures of the gods of Olympus and of pagan philosophers on their walls, art was already prepared for their presentment, thanks to an earlier infraction of the letter of the dogma.

The Italy of this time is given up to a very fever of picture-making ; simultaneously, the painters of all the towns are working, travelling, exchanging ideas. There is an irresistible lyric outburst. The country is covered with churches and cloisters whose rich Chapters all crave for frescoes and pictures. Princes and lords are no less eager ; every ruler is a patron, as is every republic, and the inextricable complications of politics and of civil or foreign wars fail to retard this artistic energy. On the contrary, it seems as if every one, scorning life and equally prepared at any moment for extravagant good fortune or for some great reverse, hastens to enjoy art as a pleasure of the highest sort. But this taste takes possession even of the lower classes, and everywhere there is a demand for paintings for the least important façade, the tiniest of chapels.

In such an atmosphere painters are fêted and

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encouraged, excited to produce more, to excel each other. They crowd to fulfil the expectation of princes and of democracies. Their production is immense ; many of them are completely unknown to us who are guided by the opinions of a few writers like Vasari, valuable no doubt, but by many an indifferent judgment giving us cause to fear his neglect of men of great worth. Of those whom we know many have almost entirely perished, either by pillage and fire when revolution and invasion devastated the towns, or when with a magnificent carelessness generation after generation jettisoned masterpieces of fresco, to replace them with other masterpieces more in harmony with the new ideals. Easel-pictures have been better preserved ; but what treasures have we not lost among frescoes ! And yet the museums of the whole world are filled to overflowing with the work of these two centuries. Painters are not only the instruments of a religious ideal, and we should be wrong if we thought of them as devotees in a perpetual ecstasy ; they are noble, respected, proud of their guilds, mixing in public life, close students, but of a free spirit ; passionate minds independent of the discipline of the ecclesiastics whom they serve.

A personality like that of Leonardo, however extraordinary, is no isolated phenomenon : it is the supreme climax of a condition of intellectual superiority towards which all are pressing. Painting, infinitely more than letters (music does not yet exist), is the great language of the intellect.



THE BIRTH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST (GHIRLANDAJO)

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Her only theme is religion. She varies it endlessly ; to sacred images she adds Bible stories, then the lives of the saints, then the heroic history of the Church herself, then donors and princes, and last of all Nature and human society, so that little by little the restriction of the unique subject-matter is no more than the theme of a symphony which respects it but overflows on every side. In the sixteenth century it is no more than a pretext, when faced with the audacious restoration of mythology. Nothing can give an idea of this miraculous flowering, unless perhaps it is the forward stride of science in the nineteenth century or the development of music from Bach onward. This concourse of painters is extraordinary. We may distinguish beneath the flood certain secret currents ; in relation to Florence, Mantegna at Padua, Francia at Bologna, Perugino at Siena, are outstanding ; and the whole movement converges in the fifteenth century towards an ideal of perfection which finally reaches its incarnation in a single man, Leonardo. In him the fifteenth century closes and the sixteenth opens in its splendour. All can be classified and explained by the critical deductive study of the documents. But what remains indescribable is the energy of this outburst, the hidden cause of this germination, the law by which painting became, to a degree it was never to recover, the language of ideas made visible, an art as intellectual as metaphysics or poetry—the law which kept it for a hundred years on the summit of pure thought, till it wavered,

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intoxicated with its own power, and fell for ever from this pinnacle, leaving with us a bitter regret for its lost secrets.

Religion does not explain everything : already, in the middle of the fifteenth century many doubted, and served their idol Painting under the pseudonym of piety. There was something that we do not know, a mental phenomenon as impenetrable as certain geological phenomena. Unquestionably, after the decline of Italian Art, there were sublime artists in France, in Spain, in Holland, in England, or in Germany, but they never again found that psychological quality, that majesty, that special mystical vein of the Italians of 1300 to 1500, although they too were possessed of a sovereign technique and a magnificent ideal. The radiant immateriality of ancient Italy will remain her magic secret, symbolized by the smile of Monna Lisa. Pictorially, it is not quite true to say that Leonardo is the climax of an equally rich evolution. Isolated in their perfection, his few works leave the glory of the fresco painters untouched ; and the Last Supper itself has no connexion with their creations. But morally Leonardo is indeed—and therein lies the secret of the awestruck admiration of his contemporaries—the man in whom is concentrated that liberation of the artist and the intellectual, the miraculous union of antique wisdom and the Florentine patrician temper, the man of free inquiring mind, to whom must be allowed, without scandal but without fear, that very Faith whose end they were hastening.

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A phrase of his is significant from this point of view. "I let the sacred Scriptures be, because they are the sovereign truth." Having registered this formula of obedience with an undefinable irony, he bends his wits to belie it by all the propositions of his experimental science. It is the wise man's precaution as it will be used up to the nineteenth century; we can hear already beneath it the echo of the "*E pur si muove*" of Galileo. For the rest, Leonardo is no less independent of that blind respect for antiquity which was to become as irksome to free consciences as Christian dogmatism, and for the pedants of this new religion he has already the courteous disdain of a Montaigne.

The prodigious apparition of Leonardo is thus above all intellectual; his pictorial works discourage painters by the miracle of their perfection, and above all by the addition of something they are not slow to divine—a mentality totally distinct from talent properly so called. After him, social circumstances displace the centre of intellectual and artistic gravity in Italy. He is, besides, the first to give the signal for desertion, he who is the type of the never-satisfied wanderer, disdainful of loyalties to home and country. Florence, disturbed by struggles for and against the Medici, eclipsed in the time of Lodovico Il Moro by the splendour of the Milanese Court, was to be supplanted by Rome, where Sixtus IV, Alexander VI, Julius II, and Leo X were meditating the centralization of all the power and all

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the glory of Italy. Rome, whom Julius II had dreamed sublime—Rome, given up to scepticism, to humanism and then to the most shameless pagan corruption—was to deprive the proud and fervent Tuscan city of her intellectual heritage, only to squander and debase it. Leonardo, with his wizard gift, seems to have foreseen these new times; he is the culminating point, and he is mournful over the fall. Dissensions gave him a distaste for Florence; they had not formerly estranged the loyal heart of Dante Alighieri. Already, in his lifetime, first Michelangelo and then Raphael carried to Rome their glory and their genius, and an enthusiastic crowd had followed them there. Florence, after the crisis of mystical revolt brought about by Savonarola, had experienced a great upheaval; this exodus, due to political events, made an end of her mighty labour. With Michelangelo and Raphael settled at Rome, Leonardo dead in France, the intellectual light of the marvellous city grew dim. The execution of Savonarola had first broken the patriotic hopes of Botticelli, Lorenzo di Credi, Michelangelo, and all those freedom-loving spirits opposed to Popery and jealous for Republican independence. Michelangelo, who had witnessed the siege of 1530 and the final triumph of tyranny, was, in spite of the consolation of his colossal works in Rome, to die protesting and despairing. His presence in Florence about 1504, together with Leonardo, at the time of the decoration of the council room of the Signoria, was the last act of encouragement

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given by two geniuses to the artists of the new generation.

Still, Florence did not collapse ; she declined nobly like a great aristocrat, and one can only speak of decadence and of corruption with reference to Rome and Venice. Florence had still masters like the young Fra Bartolommeo (1475-1517), so dignified, so scholarly, who often influenced Raphael (Pieta and S. Mark in the Pitti Gallery, Virgin in the Cathedral of Lucca). She had Andrea del Sarto (1487-1531) the great colourist of the frescoes in the Annunziata and the Scalzo. She had Albertinelli (Visitation in the Uffizi), Ridolfo Ghirlandajo (Scenes of the Life of S. Zenobius in the Uffizi). She had Pontormo (1494-1557), and above all she had that profound and fascinating portrait-painter, that master of chiaroscuro, of whom Florence holds so many masterpieces, Angelo Bronzino (1502-1592). And Florence had, too, in sculpture, a little later, a genius in Benvenuto Cellini (1500-1572), and a fine talent in Gian Bologna (1524-1608) before her painting died away in the hands of a Cristofano Allori (1577-1621) of a Furini, of a Carlo Dolci, who, however, is not to be despised with his sometimes over-suave mannerism (1616-1686).

Florence was not corrupted. She ceased her effort by degrees. Everything had come from her ; she had been the soul of the colossal Italian effort during two centuries of unforgettable brilliancy. In the evolution of Italian art she was truly the Holy City, far worthier of this name than the

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Rome she had instructed. Papal Rome has produced nothing : she has drawn her profit from Tuscan-Umbrian art, then gone astray into paganism and scepticism ; and, after extinguishing pure Christian inspiration in herself to rekindle its ashes with the sensual flames under Alexander VI and Leo X, she once again, under Paul IV, dismayed by the Lutheran revolt, plunged back into a Christianity which she had unlearned. And this Christianity at once became the puritanical, hypocritical, and cruel bigotry of the Jesuits. Italian art made no resistance to this crisis which took from it at once its faith in dogma and its liberty in humanism ; the waverings of the Papacy led it to rapid and irremediable decadence. The uprooting of Tuscan and Umbrian art, its transplantation into the perverted plutocratic Rome of the Popes, of the infamous Alexander VI, of the crafty and frivolous Leo X, belying the great soul of Julius II, of the sad Paul IV, was one of the most deplorable events in the history of art, in spite of the prejudice to the contrary, and the whole Renaissance has been distorted by it. At any rate, Florence is but the noble victim of the sinister Roman tyranny ; bearing no guilt, she remained high and pure. Dispossessed, but unsoiled, after two thousand years of interval, the capital of Tuscany did again for the egotistic Rome of the Popes and their creatures what the proud Etruscan kingdom had done for the coarse spirit of Latium, giving it a language, an art, a civilization. Rome wears the tiara, Venice a crown, but on the brows of Florence

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shines an aureole. She is the Athens of Christian civilization, the City of the Shepherd, of the Monk, and of the Magi, and her dazzling intellectual history is the teacher of the modern world.

CHAPTER IV

FLORENTINE LITERATURE

FLORENCE not only created Italian painting, both fresco and easel-picture, and gave the Peninsula her principles, technique, style, sense of expressive reality, and the corporate strength of moral personality in the artist, but she also gave Italy the language of her literature and some unsurpassable models.

It does not come within the scope of this book to study Latin origins, the Provençal influence of S. Francis of Assisi, the essays of Davanzati, a Florentine who died before 1280, of Guittone, of Guinizelli, the Bolognese initiator of the *dolce stil nuovo*, of all those who were trying to write at the time when the speech of Italy used many dialects, and the idea of one national written language was still unformulated. The period from 1280 to 1295 is, for Florence, that of republican liberty and prosperity, that of the great architectural awakening preceding the triumph of the fresco. It is equally that of a literary revelation. Florence has become the intellectual centre of the nation; she is soon to impose on all Italy that Tuscan dialect whose supremacy as a means of expression will be consecrated through her masterpieces, and which proves, in comparison

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with other local dialects, to be the most harmonious of languages, the best in structure, the nearest to the Latin.

The hundred anonymous stories of the *Novellino*, popularizations and adaptations from romances of French chivalry : Tristan, the War of Troy, the Exploits of Cæsar, the essays of Bono Giamboni, the Treasure of Brunetto Latini, the Chronicles of Divo Compagni, the poems of Francesco Barberino, of Guido Cavalcanti—all this faded before the immense personality of Dante Alighieri. He was born in 1265 of a Guelph family ; in arms against the people of Arezzo at Campaldino in 1289 ; married to Gemma Donati in 1296 ; Prior of Florence in 1300. Dante was a moderate Guelph, belonging to the party of the Bianchi, the Whites, who were opposed to Boniface VIII. In 1302, the arrival of Charles of Valois, the brother of Philippe le Bel, sent by the Pope to re-establish order in Florence after disturbances caused by the divisions of the Guelph party, gave the Neri, the Blacks, power to exile their rivals. Dante was at Rome ; he was condemned to two years of exile, and the loss of civil rights, and being unable to appear in response to the first summons of the judge, he was sentenced to perpetual banishment, and became suddenly a proscribed man. He attempted in 1305 to join with the Bianchi Guelphs and the Ghibellines in order to return to his native city. But the attempt of these exiles (*fuorusciti*) whom only misfortune could unite, was doomed to failure. Dante went away to form

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a party of himself alone. He wandered from Verona, where the Della Scala had made him welcome, to Lucca, to Ravenna, where Guido Novello received him affectionately, and died there in 1321, in despair.

This despair, made deeper by a vain illusion, caused by the coming of Henry VII in 1310, and by his sudden death, was the determining cause, not of the genius of Alighieri, but of its revelation in writing. Had he not been exiled, he might perhaps have been no more than a magistrate of literary tastes, upright and unremarkable; the iniquity of his fate, his rebellious patriotism, long inaction, and the impotent angers of his sad life, ripened his thought.

We have two works by him in Latin. One, doubtless written at the end of his life, is the treatise "De Monarchia," in which he defines the relations between the authority of the Pope and that of the Emperor, the bases of his political system; the other, the treatise "De Vulgari Eloquio" examines Italian dialects, their metre, and their philology, and fixes the rules of poetic language. But he had already begun to write in the Italian language, with the "Convito," a symbolic banquet, in which he sets forth his theories, and of which the introduction and three canzoni alone were written. And before his exile, while he was at Florence, he had written the "Vita Nuova." This series of poems gives allegorical expression to the impression made on him from the age of nine by his mystical love for the

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pure and adorable being, Beatrice, the daughter of Folco Portinari, and the wife of Simone dei Bardi, who died in 1290, an impression which memory was to prolong and intensify in exile. She was the "Lady" loved with a wholly ideal love, complicated with religious and philosophical abstractions, such as the chivalrous sentiment of the Middle Ages permitted, without prejudice to the adventures and unions of real life. The "Vita Nuova," a series of sonnets, of canzoni, is thus at the same time a witness to the happy years spent by Dante in Florence, and an allegory of inspiration incarnate in an ideal woman. Dante worked endlessly on this sort of biography and panegyric, and ended by identifying Beatrice with Divine Love and by drawing from the death and deification of his beloved the idea of the "Paradiso" in his great work the "Divina Commedia."

The poetry of the "Vita Nuova" is the most exquisite example of that *stil nuovo* created by Dante and his friends: it ushers in the splendid language of the "Commedia." It ends by predicting that Dante, having had a wonderful vision, will sing no more of Beatrice till the day when he "will be able to speak of her worthily," that is to say, in that vast mystical poem where a heavenly and transfigured Beatrice will be for the poet the interpreter of the Faith. Exile forced this poem to spring forth from this stormy, tender, and heroic soul, a few years later, in memory of the dead. The "Commedia," in, at any rate two of its parts—

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the "Purgatorio" and the "Paradiso"—is a development of the "Vita Nuova." But it is exile which inspired the "Inferno" and it is the "Inferno" which revealed to the world the extraordinary nature of Dante's genius.

The "Commedia" became, after the fourteenth century, the "Divina Commedia." It was Boccaccio who, with other admirers of the poet, gave it this title; it corresponds not only to the beauty of the work but to the continuous divine action which is there unfolded. And if Dante chose this title, in spite of the tragic and mystical character of his work, it is because it is written in the common tongue, and is full of familiar and realistic episodes. Its plan is no novelty: the symbolic "voyages" sown with allegorical episodes, with dreams, with trances, and written with some moral or religious object, the visions of Hell and of redemption, were well known and preserved vague memories of the *Æneid*. The beauty and originality of the "Commedia" lie in the riches of its images, the gradation and strength of the composition, and the reasoned plan of the Circles in Hell, intended to enhance the signification of some very striking moral ideas. It is such great art that the "Commedia" is the most perfect expression of religious ethic and of symbolism in all the Middle Ages, and one of the most majestic monuments of the world's poetry. The subject of the "Commedia" is very simple; the poet supposes that on the evening of Good Friday, April 8, 1300, lost in a deep valley, he meets Virgil, a guide sent him by God, who leads

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him through inextricable forest as far as Hell. They visit its nine Circles, then, mounting upwards from the centre of the earth, they reach the nine stages of Purgatory, and on the threshold of Paradise Virgil leaves his pupil, to be greeted by Beatrice and led on into the Empyrean. The eyes and mind of the poet are illuminated, he sees God, and comprehends the Trinity.

The valley and the dark forest which are so formidable represent sin; the poet, who has foolishly lost himself there, is humanity, ignorant of how to keep from sin. Virgil is human wisdom, which suffices to inspire a horror of evil and to lead man towards his deliverance. Beatrice is the revelation which initiates the converted sinner, and makes him able to conceive of absolute beatitude. But if the plan of the poem is clear, innumerable explanations can be provided for its multitude of symbols, closely entwined with the stories and with the actual persons who appear. Dante, in fact, constantly unites to the creatures of his imagination, the demons, and the figures from the past, persons who, in his eyes, deserved the torments of Hell, or the joys of Paradise; and these abrupt historical evocations are for us still the best opportunities of admiring the strength of his genius for pathos, of his poetic vision unsurpassed by even the greatest. He amassed in his work enough politics, theories, tales of fact, allegories, and prophecies for the "Commedia" to have with good reason appeared to his contemporaries the epitome of all didactic poetry. The element

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of pure poetry is subordinated to this cosmogony, this mystic philosophy, and these political quarrels of the banished man, who wreaks vengeance on his enemies by plunging them into eternal suffering, but whose soul, nevertheless, though irritated, still incapable of baseness, knows how to be just, and neither brands nor punishes save in accordance with the fear of God. The "Purgatorio" and the "Paradiso" are no less learnedly and ingeniously suggested, no less rich in episodes or in style than the "Inferno," but it is the "Inferno" which, more human and more alive, impressed men's minds and it is above all of this that the name of Dante makes us think.

For the rest, this colossal genius had little effect on his immediate successors. They saw in him chiefly a metaphysician and abstract theologian, a scholar and a prophet, very much the same in fourteenth-century literature as Leonardo seems to have been in sixteenth-century art; and less than fifty years after his death the "Commedia" had already become the subject of interpretations and of public discussion, because of its occult symbolism. The direct introduction of passion into poetry, and the poetic style itself, Dante's two real titles to immortality, were adopted by men of letters who never thought to praise him for them. They occupied themselves in interpreting his allegories, that part of his work which, for us, is dead.

Dante remains an isolated figure in his time, the lofty representative of the Middle Ages, which

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were nearly at an end. In 1304 there was born at Arezzo the son of a Florentine exile who had been banished at the same time as Dante, and this child, Francesco Petrarco, was destined one day to change his name to that of Petrarca, to become a great poet and the first among the men of the new age, the precursors of the Renaissance. What is called the Renaissance is, in fact, the imitation in Italy of the thoughts and the forms of the antique, that is to say, it is the period from 1520 to about 1550 ; but between the time of Dante and this time humanism was a preparation for the Renaissance ; and it was in literature as in painting, where, between the followers of Giotto and Leonardo, generations halting between mysticism and realism made possible the art of the time of the Medici. The painters from Lippi to Leonardo are neither Primitives nor children of the Renaissance. In the same way Petrarch was the great beginner of a literature which was quite different from the Dantesque preoccupations, neither mediaeval nor neo-Latin, obedient to the great longing to be free from authority and from a mystic terror, and to enjoy the beauty of life. Petrarch lived at Pisa, then in Provence, at Montpellier, at Avignon, where he met his inspiration, his Beatrice, the mysterious Laura. He travelled in Flanders, went to Paris, Rome, Naples, Parma, Prague, Milan, Venice and Padua, and died at last in 1374 at Arqua in the Euganean Hills, having spent an honoured and happy life, regarded as a great scientific and poetic figure. Two passions possessed

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his life : the love of Laura, who died in 1348, and the love of Italy. Both were frustrated. The fall of Rienzi, the miscarriage of the attempt of Charles VI in 1354, brought as desperate disillusionment to this enthusiastic and chimerical dreamer, as Dante had known when he realized the powerlessness of Henry VII ; the death of the woman whom he had loved platonically, and idealized as Dante did Beatrice, revealed to him the vanity of life. But though he was religious and a patriot, Petrarch was no mystical ascetic, like the terrible prophet of the "Commedia." He found consolation in science, in the humanities, in travelling, in honours, in country retreats, among which that of Vacluse has remained the most celebrated. Florence had unrighteously rejected Dante ; with a tardy repentance she desired to have his body, which Ravenna obstinately kept. She wished, on the contrary, to bring Petrarch, whose father she had banished, back to her, and it was he who refused to come ; he was only once there—in 1350. His works won immediate fame : in 1340 Rome led him in triumph to the Capitol as the renewer of antique letters.

Petrarch wrote in Latin an epic poem on Scipio and Roman greatness—"Africa"—some volumes of historical prose imitating Livy and Valerius Maximus, some very Ciceronian letters, Epistles and Eclogues inspired by Horace and Virgil, the treatise "Of Contempt of the World," that on "The Solitary Life," and a multitude of erudite writings. But he remains to us chiefly the very



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great lyric poet of the "Rime," and the "Trionfi," where he paints, with a touch, till then unknown, a passionate soul, unquiet, exquisite, full of doubts and of touches of the subtlest psychology. The "Rime" are the evocation of the ideal figure of Laura; the "Trionfi," in which she is still the essential character, are a sort of vague allegory, like enough in its plan to the "Commedia," but very inferior to it in its inequality and its rambling composition. Petrarch was above all a poet of intense compactness, curiously close in that way to our modern lyrists, to the English Lake poets, and to Lamartine.

A story-teller was to take a decisive step in the direction of realism and humanism and to differ profoundly from Petrarch, and from Dante. Giovanni Boccaccio was born at Paris in 1313, the child of a Florentine merchant, who was on a journey. Returning to Florence when still quite young, destined for trade, he was sent to Naples to the Court of King Robert of Anjou, where he knew how to find both success and love. He studied hard and discovered his literary vocation; he began to write in 1338, returned to Florence, then went to Ravenna, then, in 1346, to Forli, and last to Naples in 1348. The death of his father brought him back to Florence. It was there he wrote his "Decameron" between 1350 and 1353. Then the friendship of Petrarch, and his religious scruples, changed the spirit of Boccaccio; he abjured his works and devoted himself to studies in latinity and Dantesque exegesis, until his death

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in 1375. Of his many works the "Filocolo," the "Filostrato," the "Fiammetta," the "Teseide," the "Ninfale Fiesolano," the "Amorosa Visione," none is equal to the charming and lively "Decameron," fiction of licentious grace, which describes the life of a troop of young men and young women of Florence who fled from the pestilence of 1348 to a villa at Fiesole, and there passed their time in pleasure, in gallantry, and in comic or wanton tales. There is in it a surprising science of composition, the gift of life, and a new spirit. Boccaccio writes in order to please and not to elevate the soul, glorify a dogma, or make a system of symbols. He is the first professional man of letters. His contemporary Giovanni Villani, who died in 1348, but whose work was carried on by his brother Matteo and his nephew Filippo, until 1364, is the first historical chronicler, full of vigour, and rich in observation, whose writings are, for us, incomparable documents of the political and commercial life of Florence in the fourteenth century. At this moment, too, S. Catherine of Siena was writing, and at this moment appeared the Italian version of the delicious "Fioretti," composed in Latin and recording the marvellous life of Francis of Assisi. A whole literature of commentaries on Dante, of which Boccaccio himself gave an example by writing, after his licentious works, a Life of Dante, goes on simultaneously with these other works, and popular lyricism holds its own with Antonio Pucci. The movement is thus very varied, and humanism succeeds



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mediaeval literature under the guidance of Petrarch and of Boccaccio.

Coluccio Salutati (1331-1406), Chancellor of the Signoria, is the first, with Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459), to start the great movement for the exhumation of Latin works as well as the revival of Greek, with the concurrence of men like the Greeks Chrysodorus and Gemistos Phleton, who teach Greek, and make commentaries on Plato, at Florence. But the greatest instrument in this humanistic revolution is Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), who translates Plato and Plotinus, and reconciles neo-Platonist theories with Christianity. Protected by Cosimo the Elder, he revives at Florence the public discussions of the Academy close to the hermitage of Camaldoli in the valley of the Arno, and the rest of Italy follows his example. Leonardo Bruno, called Aretino, who must not be confused with the too celebrated pamphleteer, having succeeded Salutati as Chancellor, wrote a history of Florence down to 1402 in twelve volumes. Matteo Palmieri (1400-1475) composes his philosophical poem the "City of Life" in the Dante tradition, but Gherardi imitates Boccaccio, though a public expounder of Dante in Florence, and we begin to see the appearance of those letters, those chronicles of daily life, those familiar dialogues which the intelligent burghers of the city love to edit, and which are so precious as giving us the portrait of this period. By this intimate literature and by the popular song, the mystery play, and the farce, the Tuscan

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language survived the crisis which, in bringing Latin back to life as the only noble and elevated language, ran the risk of stifling the national genius under borrowed tags. Therein lies the useful work of the "Sacra Rappresentazione," that artless pageant of the public square, a wholly Italian form of our French mystery play, as well as the work of burlesque poetry, whose originator was the humble barber, Burchiello, who died in 1448, exiled from Florence, for his bold satires. Lastly, Leon Battista Alberti, who died in 1473, was one of the first to write Italian prose, in the midst of a humanism, triumphant indeed, but near its end.

Lorenzo de' Medici himself was not only the patron of this Italian reaction against the exclusive use of Latin, but one of its upholders, since he wrote a number of poems—"Corinto," "Ambra," "Selva d' Amore"—some mystery plays, and some verses, pious or wanton. Cosimo had been the patron of the humanities; Lorenzo, without ceasing to honour them, was the active inspirer of Tuscan poetry and revived the tradition of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, which was interrupted by the great burst of curiosity which brought to light, admired, and imitated Latin and Greek, to the exclusion of all else. By his side shone Angelo Politian, the smooth and scholarly lyricist of the "Giostra," written in honour of Giuliano de' Medici, the victim of the Pazzi; Pulci, (1432-1484), the author of the "Morgante," poem of chivalry and buffoonery, of which Roland

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is the hero ; Montepulciano, a charming rhymers of ballads. And at the same time the formidable voice of Savonarola thundered in Florence, crying aloud to the people his rugged Bible paraphrases, his alarming prophecies which bear such vehement witness to the eloquence of the pulpit in the fifteenth century. Finally, we must pay our homage in Florentine literature of this time to the treatises in which Leonardo formulated the scientific and æsthetic methods of his genius in phrases of marvellous clearness and a precision which makes them a model of modern scientific language, and for the moving sonnets, and admirable writings of Michelangelo in his old age.

From this moment the movement, which had taken its start in Florence, was to turn aside, like the movement of painting and sculpture, to advantage Milan, Rome, and Naples. The greatest writers, like the greatest painters, were to be born, and to work, elsewhere. But without Florence, they would never have existed. In everything she was the great Initiator, before she was the great Despoiled. She gave to Italy fresco painting and style ; then stood back and was silent, for her task was fulfilled. As in painting, her creative power became exhausted, but never corrupt. And this power showed itself in all the realms of thought. It had revealed to Italy her greatest philosophic poet, Dante ; her loveliest lyrist, Petrarch ; her most delightful story-teller, Boccaccio ; her finest group of humanists with Ficino and Politian. It gave her also the two great historians,

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one of whom is also her profoundest essayist, Guicciardini and Machiavelli. None of the celebrated writers of Milan, Rome, or Naples—Ariosto, Tasso, Goldoni, Metastasio, Alfieri, Leopardi, Monti, Manzoni, Carducci—has attained such heights as these Florentine pioneers.

Machiavelli, born at Florence in 1469, was secretary of the Signoria till 1512, ambassador to Catherine Sforza, the virile and redoubtable mother of Giovanni delle Bande Nere, to Cæsar Borgia, to Louis XII, to Maximilian. Falling from favour on the return of the Medici and the death of Savonarola, he retired, and wrote his celebrated work "The Prince," the fruit of his observation of politics, as well as his "Discourse" on Livy and his dialogues on the "Art of War." Next he wrote the History of Florence up to the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent, commissioned by Clement VII. He returned to favour with the Medici, but seems to have been suspected when these were driven out by the Republicans for the second time, and died the same year, in 1527. Few figures have been more calumniated than that of this great worker, this founder of the philosophy of history, this sincere patriot, who, dreaming of the salvation of Italy and foreseeing her ruin, saw no hope save in the providential discovery of a man strong enough to found a State, a centre of resistance and of national unity. To this end the ardent Italian did not scruple to sacrifice even religion and morality; or, rather, being an impersonal theorist, an observer of surprising

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insight, as fatalist, as empirical as Taine himself, he kept aloof from those domains, faced facts and necessities, sought for what the Italy of his time might hope for from the men of his time, and these men were indeed such as he has painted them. "Machiavellism" is thus an absurd legend; we must, if we wish to pose as defenders of morality and of religion, blame the men among whom Machiavelli lived and not him. Machiavelli is as impartial as a physiologist: for him, as for Taine, whom no one certainly suspected of "Machiavellism," virtue and vice are products, like vitriol and sugar. He possessed the large synthetic outlook of great historians: thrown out of his employment he could only write, while he might have been the Cavour of his time. His fate, both in life and after death, was unjust and sad, for he is one of the finest intelligences of his century, and one of the most independent minds that ever incurred thoughtless and unintelligent blame. His political conception rests on the necessity of having an absolute ruler, to establish a strong city, and next on the gradual and reasoned adherence of the people to the form of a Republic, and to this ideal, the worship of the common weal and confidence in collective will and intelligence, everything ought to be sacrificed. The nation in arms should, once it has realized itself, make the prince who organized it superfluous. This idea led Machiavelli to write on military art by intuition, and without personal knowledge, some amazing pages. Moreover, he is the first to seek a logical

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explanation of events in the interpretation of the laws which govern the life of a people. He was a man of genius ; and this man whose name has become a proverb for perfidy and inhuman morals, was, in fact, a scapegoat, a thinker misunderstood in his life, who lived in poverty, and whose family perished in destitution. The princes he had advised and tutored did nothing for him. Like Leonardo, he sought vainly for a man who should be above his time ; and, again with Leonardo, he was undoubtedly the man of his time most haunted by a presentiment of the modern spirit, philosophical and scientific, a sort of political Darwin in embryo. This extraordinary man also found time to defend the supremacy of Tuscan as a literary language against Trissino, in a celebrated quarrel, to write an extremely pungent satirical comedy, " *La Mandragora*," a work of audacious anti-clericalism ; a satire in terza rima, " *L' Asino d' Oro* " ; and another comedy " *La Clizia*." Machiavelli thus deserves the fullest rehabilitation and a place in the first ranks of the literature of that Italy which was the passionate love of his life.

Francesco Guicciardini, born in 1483, was Ambassador at the Court of Ferdinand the Catholic in 1512, Lieutenant-General of the Papal Troops, Governor of the Romagna. He lost his position in 1527, came back with the Medici in 1530, supported the accession of Cosimo I as Duke, wrote his great " *History of Italy*," and died in 1540. He was the friend of Machiavelli, and carried on his



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work with almost as much beauty of composition and style, with more critical feeling, more distrust of the abuse of general principles, more control of facts, but also with a cynical scepticism which Machiavelli did not have. Machiavelli sacrificed everything to love of his country. Guicciardini is a cynic to whom self-interest is the natural spring of all action ; and in this way his writings reveal the moral bankruptcy hidden behind the swiftness and brilliancy of the Renaissance. He revealed it still more vividly in his "Ricordi," his personal reminiscences, the intimate diary of a historian and politician who watches with indifference the collapse of the institutions which had carried the genius of Italy to such a height. We have in him the historian of a corrupt world which gives itself up to servitude, but his great talent has left us an admirable portrait of that society, of that time of strange complexity, whose dying pangs he describes with such mastery.

We next come to Lorenzo de' Medici, the murderer of Alexander I, Duke of Florence, the Lorenzaccio immortalized by Musset, who gave evidence of real talent in his comedy "Aridosia," written for the birthday of the duke whom, a year later, he was to butcher ; and his "Apologia," written in exile after the crime in order to justify it, is an admirable piece of eloquence.

The writings of Piero d' Arezzo, so shamefully celebrated under the name of Aretino—letters, plays, dialogues, or pamphlets—are a mere collection of obscenities and platitudes, when they are not

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simply libellous. But Florence had, after Guicciardini, an historian of great worth in Benedetto Varchi (1503-1565), who describes the downfall of liberty, and beside him are Nardi, Filippo dei Neri, Segni, Pitti, Ammirato, Adriani, who carry on the historical tradition.

Giorgio Vasari, a second-rate painter whose enormous and insipid compositions cumber the Palazzo Vecchio, was born at Arezzo in 1511, but is wholly Florentine in his life and work. He died in 1574, after having finished his "History of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects since Giotto," a book which is full of ingenuous judgments and commonplace traits, but which, in spite of this is a document of inestimable importance for the criticism of to-day, and the best guide to Italian art which the Renaissance has left us.

Florence, too, did not fail to produce the most perfect specimen of autobiography in the "Memoirs" of Benvenuto Cellini (1500-1571), memoirs prodigiously alive and impassioned, the most curious, the most intimate, and the most significant of Italian memoirs. Only rivalled by those of Casanova, they have kept an eternal youth; they are the most astounding picture of the times in which the great sculptor of the Perseus lived a life so active, so romantic, and so tragic.

In the seventeenth century this literary movement weakened. Ruspoli (who died in 1625) and Malatesti (who died in 1671) were popular burlesque poets of the opposite school to the preciousities of Cavaliere Marini. Lorenzo Lippi (1606-1664)



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merely imitated Tassoni. But, in the illustrious Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) we find not only a great scientific genius but also a literary power and the most ardent polemic. Witness his "Saggiatore," the refutation of a book by the Jesuit Grassi, on comets, his "Dialogue on the Great Systems," and his "Dialogues on the New Science." The first of these dialogues, a model of powerful dialectic, which opposes the system of Copernicus to that of Ptolemy, was, besides, the pretext for the trial and condemnation of 1633. The letter on the limitations of religious authority and the spirit of free research is equally admirable. Musician and draughtsman, Galileo was also the author of some poems and of commentaries on Dante, Ariosto, and Tasso. It is as if Leonardo had returned to life after a hundred years, but in a terrible period of religious reaction and national demoralization. The father of Galileo was a musician of merit, and it was at Florence at the house of Count Giovanni de Bardi, that there met together the first inventors of sung declamation, of recitative, that is to say, the precursors of opera. The first musical drama was "La Dafne," by the poet Rinuccini and the Grand-ducal Chapel Master Jacopo Peri, in 1597; and it is again at Florence, in the Pitti, that the opera "Eurydice," by the same authors, was performed in 1600, on the occasion of the marriage of Henri IV and Marie de' Medici. In the same year Caccini, in his turn, made notes on the "Eurydice" of Rinuccini. Monteverde and Lulli

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only came later. Thus it is once more to the City of the Red Lily that we owe the beginnings, if not of Palestrina's religious reforms, at least of the opera.

The Academy of the Cimento, founded in 1657, united the disciples of Galileo—Torricelli, Vincenzo Viviani, Magalotti, Mascheroni, Redi, Bellini, Spallanzani. Florence was the home of the sciences for the whole of the second half of the seventeenth century and the opening of the eighteenth. She was still the supreme city of the intellect. Here Alfieri sought for refuge, from 1792 to 1803, and wrote the story of his life. It was in honour of the Florentine dialect that Manzoni, in 1845, and again in 1868, wrote his authoritative work, "*Dell' Unita della Lingua*," to demonstrate that Tuscan was not only a written language, artificially kept alive by scholars and academies, but a living language of speech most fitted to be the chosen tongue of the new Italy. It was the siege of Florence in 1530 which gave the dictator Guerrazzi, in 1836, a subject for his masterpiece; and even recently Florence won fresh literary glory with the historical dramas of G. H. B. Niccolini (1782-1861) on Arnolfo de Brescia and Filippo Strozzi, and with the satirical poems of Giuseppe Guisti (1809-1850) and the familiar poems of Guido Mazzoni.

The essential character of her literature is the same as that which marks her painting—a delicate strength, a spontaneous union of the idea and its appropriate form. Florence is a great creator of

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form: her naturalism, far removed from our flat, modern realism, is nothing but the most naked visible embodiment of an idea.

In a triplet by Dante, a lyric by Petrarch, an anecdote by Boccaccio, an axiom of Machiavelli, a note by Leonardo, a quatrain by Michelangelo, an argument of Galileo, there are the same qualities as in a landscape by Fra Angelico, a bust by Donatello, a figure of Botticelli's, or a jewel of Cellini's, the same radiant suggestion of reason triumphing through grace and beauty, drawing the soul into the world of dream without ever losing touch with reality. All Christian art, plastic and literary, was the work of Florence; that tremendous downfall into a whirlpool of sensuality which we call the Renaissance is the work of Rome alone.

CHAPTER V

FLORENTINE ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE

THIS political and social history, disturbed by incessant tumults, these countless pictures and frescoes, these magnificent creations of poetry, letters, mysticism, and science which constitute and exalt the soul of Florence, have had a frame worthy of them. Her architecture is noble. It harmonizes with the Florentine genius as with the Florentine landscape, it unites grace and severity, it embodies the definite æsthetic ideal of the Italians of the fourteenth century—the *soave austero*.

In later chapters we shall give a detailed account of the building of these churches and these palaces, which give the City of the Red Lily its character of imperishable pride in beauty. Here, we only need a general idea: Florentine art is founded on architecture. The greater number of those amazing painters, that heroic and mystical legion of immortals, were also goldsmiths, sculptors, workers in enamel, and bronze-casters; and if they did not all have the time or the chance to build, they all loved, studied and practised architecture. They look on it as the essential art, the supreme synthesis of forms fit for the



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manifestation of an idea. It dominates their frescoes and their paintings; human forms and landscape are continually subordinated to it. The key to Florentine Æsthetics is architecture. The Tuscans have never—like Venice or Rome—allowed the charm of colour to weaken their rule that line and design must maintain an absolute supremacy. Line is all-expressive, colour is only an added delight, and line, even in the drawing of the figure, is sculptural and architectural. We dream nowadays of a sort of fusion of the arts, since Wagner tried to do this on the lyric stage. No individual artist is great enough to dare this fusion; it is, indeed only the dream of a chosen few; the masses, and those weak and superficial critics whom we possess, obstinately insist on classing and labelling talent, in only praising the man who repeats himself indefinitely. The farthest point we reach is to conceive of certain points of identity between the various states of sensibility which decide who is sculptor, musician, poet, or painter. But the Tuscans would have laughed at our hesitation—they who from childhood, in their master's studio, prepared frescoes, chased the gold of a jewel, drew a pediment or a cupola, modelled drapery or the nude figure, played the lute, and thought that all these were natural occupations for the man who aspired to the name of artist. But above everything architecture was to them a law; and the lofty monument watched over all their efforts, an image of the ideal under the blue sky, as the spire of the church

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symbolizes the upward soaring of a corporate faith.

Arnolfo di Cambio, in the thirteenth century, began to build the Duomo (1232-1301). Giotto added his Campanile, the exquisite and vigorous Shepherd's Tower which he was never to see completed, and Brunelleschi (1379-1416) gave it its imposing cupola, a masterpiece of majestic simplicity, the greatest manifestation of genius since antiquity, which Michelangelo was to take as the model for the cupola of S. Peter at Rome. In the thirteenth century the Palazzo Vecchio, also planned by Arnolfo di Cambio, raised its epic silhouette ; the warlike and imperious features of Florence are fixed there for ever. But she had long had her primitive sanctuary : the Baptistery, the ancient Church of S. John the Baptist, dated from the seventh and eighth centuries, and adapted, it served as cathedral up to 1128. She had her primitive palace too since 1255—that sombre Bargello, the home of the Podestà, which had witnessed so many riots and conflagrations. Most of the churches of old Florence were standing before Giotto created Italian painting. The fresco and the panel-picture followed after the majestic eloquence of stone ; they have been attentive to it—always.

Arnolfo di Cambio and Brunelleschi are not merely two architects dowered with a sense of the sublime, two giants finding again in the Middle Ages, after centuries of darkness and devastation, the secrets of ancient power and science ; they are

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the men who gave Florence her unchangeable frame. From whatever side one approaches her, the City of the Lily witnesses by her Duomo and her Signoria to the joint will of Brunelleschi and Arnolfo ; to these we must join that of Giotto. These three names mount up to Heaven ; it is on them that the sun first rests ; it is they that hold his last farewell look. Everything else is subservient to these, is later in time, less great. The Duomo, the Campanile, the Tower are the three soaring pinnacles of the city. The fashioning of the churches, and later of the palaces, is under their sway—those palaces which are like fortresses, built of huge blocks which call to mind Etruscan ramparts, and protecting the delicate marvels of their interiors against the flux and reflux of ever-threatening insurrection.) Sculpture was thus born from the wish to decorate those stout and rugged walls, to make them blossom ; figure, design, and ornament only became separated from them little by little, just as for two centuries painting only seemed a possible or useful thing when applied to the decoration of a wall. The wall means everything in Florentine art, till the day when the statue and the picture begin to have a separate existence and become the objects of two arts, distinct from architecture though never disowning it.

If Ghiberti (1378–1455) is the first genius to suddenly lift sculpture to as great a height as the pictorial school of Giotto, he is not its initiator ; that honour belongs to the Pisans, to the artists

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of that unhappy Pisa, the elder sister of Florence, pursued by her hatred and in the end ruined and enslaved by her. It was Andrea of Pisa and his son Nino who completed, in 1330, the door of the Baptistery, and introduced sculptural realism into the City of the Lily. It is true that Andrea died a Florentine citizen and magistrate, and sleeps under the stones of the cathedral; the fierce rivalry between the two towns could not restrain the Florentines from paying this tribute to the stranger who had offered them his genius, just as later on, the Pisans kept in their Campo Santo the body of Benozzo Gozzoli. The powerful Orcagna was a disciple of Andrea of Pisa, and it is to his inspiring influence as goldsmith, mosaic worker, and sculptor that Orcagna owed the power to execute the wonderful Tabernacle which we admire at Or San Michele. Ghiberti, too, began with goldsmith's work, then turned to sculpture, and even to painting; it is the continuous combination of these three arts, the bold fusion of their principles, which permitted him to create the second and third doors of the Baptistery, where ten scenes from the Bible and twenty-eight episodes from the life of Jesus are treated with amazing freedom and an incomparable depth of feeling. Here the sculpture has the preciousness of a jewel and yet keeps breadth and grandeur through the noble severity of the attitudes; it has all the properties of painting through the resolute application of the laws of perspective, the bold variety of movement, and the interpre-

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tation of the "bronze landscape," realizing in the background actual light and shade. The floral ornaments are as learnedly naturalistic as anything a Cellini could do two hundred years later, and the busts which spring freely from the borders, portraits of Florentine notables, are still among the most perfect and characteristic creations of Tuscan statuary. These doors, which Michelangelo adored so that he called them "the doors of Paradise,"—these doors, which occupied Ghiberti for fifty years, become at one leap, at the very beginning of a sculpture whose birth was tardy if compared with fresco, masterpieces as great and as complete as those of fresco at this period; and the genius of the artist is so headlong that this tremendous beginning outruns almost all the natural laws of statuary by wishing immediately to enrich the bas-relief with attributes which are properly pictorial.

Donatello (1386–1466) and Luca della Robbia (1399–1482) lived and triumphed at the same date as the great Ghiberti. Donatello is one of the gods of Florence, one of the truest representatives of the Florentine soul, one of the most wonderful sculptors who has ever appeared in the world. A realist, almost sombre and violent in his outlook, he is the thoughtful precursor of Michelangelo, with more concentration in feeling perhaps, with the same lion-like energy, and an accent of haughty and austere truth which belongs to him alone and which unites Gothic austerity to an æsthetic presentiment of the Renaissance.

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Neither Michelangelo nor Germain Pilon, nor Ligier Richier, nor the anonymous sculptors of the tomb of Philippe Pot can surpass the pathos of the Magdalen of the Baptistery, the dishevelled, emaciated sinner, withered by the fierceness of her penitence, the wild and fanatical S. John, the Zuccone of the Campanile, the Christ of Santa Croce. But this bitter thinker, this tragic giver of life to stone and bronze, knows too—and better than Michelangelo—how to comprehend the serenity of pure thought, as his S. George bears witness, so beautiful, so grave, so sure of victory; his young David, his Judith, his Evangelists. And he is, besides, the tender and graceful poet of the Cantoria and of those adorable bas-reliefs of the Cathedral of Prato, where childish glee dances and sings with a simplicity and a vivacity which has not been surpassed by Luca della Robbia. And finally Donatello rises without an effort to epic grandeur and gives us at Padua, in the great equestrian statue of the condottiere Gattamelata, a masterpiece which has only one equal in the world—the Colleoni, by Verrocchio, at Venice. One must linger, meditate, and dream for hours in that hall of the Bargello, where are collected together ten statues and numerous casts of the most important of Donatello's works—the marvellous bust of Niccola da Uzzano, the Child S. John, the gilded bas-relief of the Crucifixion, the Marzocco (the lion, the emblem of Florence), the S. George, the enormous Gattamelata, so strong, impressive, with its look of

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weariness and cunning, to understand to what a point such an artist can carry the psychology of his art and the power of synthetic expression of form, to understand how by the side of Michelangelo he, and he alone, may take his proud stand.

Michelozzo and Desiderio da Settignano worked with him and caught a little of his power and his pride. But his true spiritual son, his pupil, and his heir, was that Andrea di Michele, called "del Verrocchio" from the name of his first teacher, a goldsmith, and destined to be, later on, the master of Leonardo de Vinci, whom he taught to model the horse of the statue of Sforza. A superb painter, as his Baptism of Christ in the Accademia attests, an incomparable authority on art, Verrocchio is the sculptor of the subtle David of the Bargello, which rivals that of his master; of the gracious Child with the Fish, in the court of the Palazzo Vecchio. But in the history of art he exists simply as the heroic sculptor of the Venice Colleoni, whose way was prepared by the Gattamelata.

By the side of such men Luca della Robbia has only tender and fragile charm, but what treasures of grace and sweetness are contained in his mind! The sculptor of the bas-reliefs of the Campanile and the sacristy of the Duomo, he created at forty-five his groups of singing and dancing youths in the Cantoria of the Cathedral, adorable figures in which, as in Fra Angelico, life and dream are united; invented the glazed pottery based on the secrets of Hispano-Mauresque, and glorified it with a subtle variety of colour.

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He founded in a nephew, Andrea, and his four sons, a true dynasty of art whose ever further perfected discoveries were to remain an Italian secret till the day of Bernard Palissy. Florence holds the most exquisite examples of this gentle decorative genius, as pure as that of Benozzo Gozzoli, or Melozzo—a vault at S. Miniato, some reliefs at S. Piccino and the Ognissanti, a fountain at S. Maria Novella, and a whole room at the Bargello, where marvels of sparkling fragility are set off by a colour like that of flowers. Luca's work is the smile of Florence the grave.

The Rossellini brothers and the Maiano brothers are also fine artists of this very rich Quattrocento ; like Luca, they understand the *austero* less well than the *soave*, and among the profusion of genius at such a time they are forgotten : only scholars remember their names. But when praises, decorations, fruitful commissions, and much fame are being lavished on such-and-such a sculptor of our modern exhibitions, let us look at the tomb of Cardinal Portogallo in S. Miniato, the work of Antonio Rossellino ; at the pulpit by Benedetto da Maiano, at S. Croce : then we shall understand the immense difference which separates such men from us, when we see and are convinced that no one in Europe to-day is capable of conceiving or executing like pieces. And, moreover, these are only the *minores*, almost negligible by the side of Donatello, Verrocchio or even of Luca. What are we to say of Mino da Giovanni, called Mino da Fiesole, though he was not born there ; and of the



DAVID (DONATELLO)
Bargello



ST. GEORGE (DONATELLO)
Bargello

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splendid tomb which he set up to Bishop Salutati in the cathedral at Fiesole? What of Mino's monument to the Marchese Giugni in the church of the Badia? Without even a glance at his very important work in Rome, these two creations in Florence prove him to be an artist of the first rank. And the same must be said of the brothers Antonio and Piero Pollaiuolo, of Andrea Sansovino (1460-1529), the author of the group of Jesus and S. John the Baptist in the Baptistery, of the tombs in S. Maria del Popolo at Rome, and of the decoration of the Santa Casa at Loretto. The power of the Pollaiuoli bursts on us at Rome especially, but even in Florence they impress us by the energy they have inherited from Donatello.

In spite of all, this inheritance was necessarily being dissipated through the very excess of its production, for we must never forget that here, as in painting, by the side of the few men we have been able to name, a multitude of others were continually working and enriching the churches and palaces all over Italy. The tradition of Ghiberti, which brought sculpture nearer to painting, further accentuated by the polychromy of the della Robbia; the goldsmith's taste leading in sculpture to a certain preciousness of which bronze, and, even more, marble, did not admit; the search for subtle symbolism, for pretty detail, for a tempting complexity; the excessive striving for decorative effect; the diminution of religious faith and the increasing boldness of sensualism and a humanist scepticism,—these reasons, technical and moral, to which we

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must also add the dangers of a corporate tradition, were, at the end of the Quattrocento, to turn sculpture aside from the great tradition of Donatello, that is to say from the essential qualities of sculpture worthy of the antique.

The art of a Mino or of a Luca is already on the dangerous path that leads to "nobility" and mannerism, towards an art intended too much for the pleasure of a new Florence—the Florence of the Medici, of those luxurious and crafty rulers who were stifling the old and wholesome Republican spirit. It is at this moment of supreme hesitation—one of the most psychological and most complex moments in history—that Savonarola lifts up his harsh and piercing voice to warn, alarm, and attempt to save Italy; and it is at this moment that a lonely figure in art appears and towers over his age, as sombre, as powerful, as austere as Savonarola—a Dante risen from the dead, called Michelangelo. It is only as a sculptor that he must be mentioned in this book, since, with the exception of his Holy Family in the Tribuna of the Uffizi, which is, moreover, wholly sculptural in treatment, there is nothing in Florence to recall the sublime painter of Rome, the Colossus of the Sistine Chapel. But Florence at least keeps some essential witness to his terrible genius, that breathed through stone. He was born in 1474 at Caprese in the Casentino, of which his father was Podestá, but his family early returned to live in Florence, and at the age of thirteen, the young man entered the studio of Ghirlandajo. There he



THE "MARZOCCO" BRONZE REPLICA OF DONATELLO'S SCULPTURE
Piazza della Signoria



DAVID (VERROCCHIO)
Bargello

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learnt very thoroughly the principles of painting and the technique of the fresco, and this education was later on to help him to achieve the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. But the sight of the antiques gathered together by the Medici, the study of Verrocchio, Jacopo della Quercia, and Donatello led him to give up painting for sculpture and to found his æsthetic faith, not on the evocation of decorative truth and feeling, but on the nude figure in its infinite combinations. This repudiation of the Florentines of a former generation, this unconditional return to the antique, were in accordance with the character of this young man, ugly, feverish, sombre, austere, pious, ardently patriotic, disapproving of the luxury of the society in which he lived, hating its profane humanism, and ready to become the disciple of Savonarola, whose execution left him inconsolable. And yet his longing to rehandle traditional forms silences, in his early works, the passion which is stirring in his lonely heart. His bas-relief of the Centaurs, his Bacchus, inspired, not by the Greek art, which he did not know, but by works of Roman decadence, are only expressionless combinations of forms and bulk and are valueless. In the David of 1501 we can better divine the heroic character of his subsequent art. The cartoon of the Pisan War is lacking in expressiveness, but the wonderful anatomical perfection shows the rapidity of Michelangelo's progress in the comprehension of the antique. Rough and simple, this art, by its healthy energy, filled all the young with enthusiasm,

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and made a like effect, amid the graceful, flowery production of the moment, as the frescoes by Masaccio in the Brancacci Chapel had made, recalling art to the path of direct and powerful truth. This work had been commissioned by Soderini to decorate the Council Hall of the Signoria, where Leonardo was working at that time on his Battle of Anghiari. The illustrious master and the young novice were thus pitted one against the other ; and both works were left unfinished, and both are lost. We only know them through engravings. In that of Leonardo's cartoon expression was all-important, in Michelangelo's form : in the one fury, life, passion, and feeling ; in the other only learned combinations of anatomy and movement. Michelangelo did not love Leonardo, and let him see it in some of those bitter words which he too often let fall in the course of his misanthropic life. Still we may imagine that his realization of the coldness of his work beside that of his rival may have led him to foresee his own future violence of expression, latent in him, restrained by technical scruples. But the charm of Leonardo, his supreme grace, his subtle wisdom, his haughty indifference to civic squabbling, his mysterious and sceptical outlook on life, his intellectualism, holding itself, like Goethe's, whom he resembles, superior to all religious or patriotic appeals—all this exasperated the fanatic young sculptor, so passionately a believer and a Republican, true son of Dante. He went so far as to insult him publicly : the sage made no answer.

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Between the Centaurs and the David, Michelangelo had gone to work at Bologna and later at Rome (where he had made his first *Pieta*). Returning to Florence in 1501, he not only executed the David and the Pisan War, but also the picture of the Holy Family in the Uffizi, and the bas-relief of the Madonna (Diploma Gallery, London). The passion for antique form was to yield with him to the influence of the Bible, and of Dante ; or, rather, he was to attempt to compass within the forms of the antique all the fervour of Christian exaltation, and this union of the antique and the mediaeval was to engender all that vast and strange art of the Sistine Chapel. In 1505 Julius II sent for him to Rome to execute his colossal tomb. In 1506 Michelangelo came back suddenly, in anger : the Pope, always full of enthusiasm for some new project, had given up the idea of the tomb, and was thinking of nothing but how to rebuild S. Peter's. The artist was soon recalled, resisted, and was forcibly sent to Bologna, from whence the terrible Pope, having made his triumphant entry, had him summoned, with threats, to the Signoria. The price of his pardon was a colossal statue of Julius II : then the sculptor and the Pope returned to Rome, and the duel went on between the two powers, who admired while they opposed each other. The sculptor wished to make the tomb, the Pope exacted the Sistine ceiling ; the rebellious artist gave way, and shut himself up in order to carry out alone the vast masterpiece in this hall, which he entered still

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young but was only to leave as an old man, prematurely broken, with an altered soul (1508-1512).

In 1513 Julius II died and Leo X succeeded him. Michelangelo had made a contract to complete the tomb of the great Pope, but the vicious and frivolous Leo X cared nothing for the glorification of his austere predecessor, and, like a true Medici, hated Michelangelo. He saw in him the friend of Savonarola, and a Republican whose moody severity seemed, in the midst of his Court of brilliant, sceptical, and dissolute humanists, a troublesome evocation of the past. He quickly freed himself from it. Michelangelo all his life was determined to carry out the tomb; he made the Moses, the Leah, the Rachel, the Slaves, the Triumphant Genius, but the Popes never allowed him to bring his sublime figures together and to complete the work. What we see now in S. Pietro in Vincoli is but fragments. The bad faith of Leo X made the second act of this "tragedy of the tomb," as Michelangelo bitterly called it. In 1516, interrupting a work which did not tend to his own glorification, the Pope sent Michelangelo to Florence to make a colossal façade for S. Lorenzo. The artist set out full of enthusiasm, dreaming of an epic work. Since his four years' seclusion in the Sistine Chapel, he cared only for vast projects, and this one might console him for the disaster of the tomb. But in 1520 the Pope, on the pretext of lack of money, broke the contract, signed in 1518, and as compensation the artist was commissioned by Cardinal



TOMB OF LORENZO DE' MEDICI (MICHELANGELO)
New Sacristy of San Lorenzo



TOMB OF GIULIANO DE' MEDICI (MICHELANGELO)
New Sacristy of San Lorenzo

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Giulio de' Medici, the future Clement VII, to build the Medici Library, the sacristy, and the tombs of the family. The Republican was forced into the service of the usurpers' dynasty. Having thus freed himself of the sombre visionary, Leo X, the sceptic, the epicurean, and the pagan, found himself left to direct as he chose the gentle genius of Raphael.

Michelangelo, resigned, set to work. In 1524 the sacristy was built, an unequal and powerful work, revealing the extravagant tendencies of his fierce spirit, tempted by the idea of magnitude and impatient of logical rules and restraint, at times to the edge of madness. Then the tombs were begun. They, too, were never finished, and it took ten years to put what was finished, in its place. But what a terrible ten years! Defeat, shame, the degradation of morals, the utter decadence of Renaissance society, Lutheran anger stirring, in Germany to proclaim a schism and call down lightnings upon Babylon, and the savage hordes of Bourbon and Frondsberg singing, while they sacked and burnt the accursed city, Luther's "Chorale." The siege of Florence herself, where the artist, turned military engineer, directed the defence, the decay of faith and of liberty, the collapse of Papal authority, degraded by its unworthy representatives—this is what the patriot, the mystic, almost like a Lutheran in his constant resort to the Bible, and his disgust at Roman morals, had to endure, see, and suffer helplessly, while he recalled the prophecies of

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his martyred master. Forced to do honour by his art to the family which had enslaved and corrupted his country, at least he expresses in these tombs the allegory of his heartrending grief. No decoration, no architectural ornament, bare walls, the simplest of brackets and corbels; only the figures reveal the drama of this great soul. The Medici are the empty pretexts for this pathetic revelation, more especially as the ones represented played no important part in history. Giuliano, Duc de Nemours, is the son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and the brother of Leo X. Night and Day wait on him. Dawn and Twilight are placed below Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, the grandson of Lorenzo the Magnificent and father of Catherine de' Medici. Whatever may be the beauty of this Penseroso or of his kinsman, it is foreign to their merit. And one feels at once that the names of these four allegorical figures are conventional. On the tombs of these mediocre and irresponsible members of a sinister family it is a polluted and conquered Italy that dreams and weeps. As to the tomb of the Magnifico, its place is empty: there is only here, between the figures of S. Cosmo and S. Damian, sculptured by pupils from the designs of Michelangelo, his sublime Madonna, an unsurpassable figure of suffering meditation who lifts, against the cold and simple bareness of the wall, her unforgettable silhouette. Between the Madonna of Bruges, all grace and refinement, that of the Bargello bas-relief, that of Rome, full of Verrocchio's influence, and this Madonna full of restrained

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despair, there lies a whole world—the world of disappointments, angers, vast dreams, and Titanic plans; of resigned longings for death, all that tumultuously agitated this soul too great for its time. Of all artists, Michelangelo is the most absolutely subjective. He moulds and distorts forms as his inward passion dictates; concentrated within himself, he never surrenders to the world without, or stoops to mere observation—a moody, solitary figure, uniting so marvellously Antiquity and the Middle Ages, destined to exercise to his cost the most dangerous influence over those who imitated his extravagances without having the genius to explain and justify them. And these extravagances, which were to be carried to their extreme in the Last Judgment, can be already noticed in the architecture and in certain of the figures in the sacristy. But they are integral parts of his pathos—a pathos that tears the heart if one lingers, at dusk, in this sad and sumptuous hall of coloured marble, where the seven figures of this unique ensemble stand out against their background.

Later, much later, after he had painted for Paul III that fierce Last Judgment, which condemns both triumphant Lutheranism and the old excesses of the sacrilegious Popes, of Borgia and of Leo X, after having, as an old man, completed that Sistine Chapel where his youth had triumphed, the great, lonely figure came back to Florence and painted that Descent from the Cross which is in the Duomo, behind the high

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altar, in the very place where the Pazzi struck down Giuliano de' Medici. It is unfinished, but this, perhaps intentional incompleteness gives it an extraordinary power of suggestion. And while he worked he finished the writing of his sonnets, flowers of melancholy poetry, in which he exhibits an unsuspected tenderness, and where one feels the passing presence of the only woman he ever loved—his Beatrice, his Laura, like them a spiritual lover of genius—the pious and learned Vittoria Colonna.

If the last twenty years of this long life were spent at Rome in the creation of the dome of S. Peter's, a prodigy which crowns a series of prodigies, at least he sleeps at Florence, in S. Croce, beside the monument of Dante, his peer: the greatest master of fresco, of architecture, and of sculpture that Florence gave to Italy and to the world.

“My knowledge will breed dunces,” he wrote disdainfully. It did not breed dunces but bombastic imitators. His passion for anatomy, his worship of the nude, considered as the key to the art of expression, his audacious amplification of forms, his ruggedness,—all this in the hands of his imitators brought about a rapid decadence, an insupportable tendency to the turgid. Michelangelo was, of all plastic geniuses, the least suited for forming a school; everything was remade in his mentality—he modified nature in accordance with his own arbitrary will. Painters and sculptors roused to enthusiasm by his last works, believed that in order to attain his greatness it was enough



VIRGIN AND INFANT JESUS (MICHELANGELO)
New Sacristy of San Lorenzo

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to copy and still further to exaggerate his muscular over-statements ; yet the whole power of his superhuman figures came from within. Baccio Bandinelli was the type of these pseudo-artists—he who believed and called himself the rival of the Titan and to whose absurd vanity the Hercules and Cacus by the Signoria bears witness.

After Michelangelo comes the end of Florentine sculpture. Moreover, all Italy was surrendering to the collapse ; he who had been her last great mystic, her last great citizen, was also her last great artist. His majestic and sorrowful old age looked on at the decadence. After the gracious and radiant Sanzio there followed the Bolognese School—cold, accomplished, without a soul ; and the Jesuit style of Vignola was about to disfigure the whole Peninsula—a style well worthy of the bigoted reaction of a papacy which renounced the Pagan Renaissance out of terror of the Reformation and called the Inquisition and the Society of Jesus to its aid. Venice was to see her art collapse in the hands of the imitators of Veronese. Milan, Siena, Padua were finally silenced ; the exodus of the Medici into France was to prepare the way for the dreary painting of the seventeenth century, the most mediocre period in French art. Academicism, that deadly error, that code of clever, empty receipts borrowed from a degenerate Italian art, was to invade the artistic world. Power was elsewhere, though still latent, in the Flanders and the Spain where Rubens, Rembrandt, and Velosquez had not yet appeared. Michelangelo

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died the embodiment and consummation of a world that perished with him.

After the Colossus only two men deserve naming : Benvenuto Cellini, and Gian Bologna, who in his long life (1524–1608) was a fine sculptor of generous talent, the author of the very celebrated Mercury (that which we see in the Bargello), of the Rape of the Sabines, of the Hercules felling Nessus, which are exhibited in the Loggia dei Lanzi. As for Cellini (1500–1572), he was an incomparable goldsmith, a sculptor whose heroic and radiant Perseus bears sufficient witness to his science and genius, and finally a man even more astonishing than his work, the marvellous writer of the Autobiography, the being who most violently impersonates the mentality of Roman and Florentine artists of the Renaissance. Stupendous in his wit, his courage, his brag, his cunning, his perfect lack of a moral sense, his anticipation of romanticism, he never in the midst of his life of adventures, murders, revels, imprisonments, and excesses, ceased to be devoted to art or forget his touching admiration of Michelangelo. His infinitely picturesque combination of bully, rake, and great artist worthily closes the culminating chapter of Florentine beauty before the final silence, the awaiting of the judgment of History. Cellini's art is, logically, the last term—pure, firm, and unaffected—of Ghiberti's original statement, as the last Pieta of Michelangelo is the outcome of the principles of Donatello. From beginning to end the twofold tendency takes its

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parallel way. It was destined to a twofold degeneration : on the one hand preciousness, the worship of pretty detail, leading to the insipidity of the Jesuit style, and the ridiculous mausoleums of the modern *campi santi* where marble is treated as lace ; on the other hand, the melodramatic flamboyance, the intolerable redundancy of a Canova. But Florence has no responsibility for either one failure or the other. There, as in painting, while Rome corrupted and coarsened, Florence simply became silent. This abrupt stop is the symbol of the inborn perfection of the Florentine soul. To say everything, and then to cease from speech, this was the secret of her genius—that genius with its sense of measure, its deliberate energy, its lucid strength, guided by the inspiration breathed from her skies and from her noble and tender landscape, the motto of *Soave Austero*.

CHAPTER VI

THE MUSEUMS

WE have seen, then, what Florence's past was like before she ceased to create, and rested, her task ended, serenely waiting the judgment of history. But the superhuman life which she created could not end because the creator remained silent; and although many masterpieces were dispersed to carry the glory of Tuscany through the vast world, the noblest remained. Florence is no dead city; she does not, like Nuremburg, enclose within her a city of the past, encircled by the new, industrial, modern town. The whole of Florence is a living museum. The figures we see in her frescoes still walk the streets, and if certain of her buildings are more particularly consecrated to the gathering together of these marvels, they at least are not prisons of art, not burying grounds for masterpieces like the gloomy museums of the North. The whole town is a shrine for art; it is in the open square, and smiles freely at the astonished passer-by. With us art is only in museums; in Florence it is there as well as elsewhere, and in this delicate difference lies all the magical nobility of the City of the Lily.

At the angle of the sombre and colossal Palazzo

THE MUSEUMS

Vecchio stands the vast gallery where the Archives, the Library, and the paintings originally collected by the Medici are now kept. The fine planning of its arcades, stretching from the Palazzo to the Arno, may make us indulgent to their architect, the good Vasari, builder and fresco painter, whom we habitually belittle, but who, in spite of all, probably outweighs a good many of the second-rate medal winners in our *salons*, if his "History of Painters," written with faith, modesty, and love by a "loyal esquire" of the Bayards of the fresco and the picture, were not enough to ensure him at least our gratitude.

In the Uffizi, more than anywhere else in the world, we may be able to grasp the great synthetic idea of Florentine art, since we can relate it visibly and spiritually to the city where it was born, and which lies before us, seen through those vast bays which open on the Arno, San Miniato, the Ponte Vecchio, and the battlements of the Palazzo Vecchio. The rooms are reached from three corridors filled with grotesques and with pictures of the second rank, with drawings and with antique marbles, to which the view over Florence offers a most rich decoration, the fresco of architectural life and of the sky. There, beside the Satyrs, Bacchus and Marsyas, Roman copies from the Greek, beside the Discobolus and the busts of Emperors, we see delicate pieces by the pupils of Giotto, by Simone Memmi, Signorelli, Uccello, Lorenzo Monaco, Rosselli, and Lorenzetti; but for these masters we must look elsewhere, on

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the walls of the churches which hold their genius.

And suddenly the visitor, athirst for beauty, enters the Tribuna, the octagonal room where the most famous pieces are gathered together. It is a little temple, decorated richly, yet subtly, where Poccetti, towards 1580, poured out his charming imagination. In the middle, set against a bright background of paintings, a few splendid marbles : the Dancing Faun, restored by Michelangelo ; the Wrestlers ; the Knife Sharpener, crouching and mysterious, who perhaps is a Scythian sharpening his knife to flay Marsyas ; a young Apollo ; and finally the exquisite Venus de' Medici found at Rome in the sixteenth century, and brought to Florence in 1680, almost unharmed in her moving grace and pure slenderness. But this formidable evocation of antique perfection and power does not dim the glory of the paintings. Here is Titian's Venus of Urbino in all her glorious nudity, in the sensual splendour of her flesh and the boldness of her luxurious background. Here is Venus and Cupid by the same great lyricist of the feminine. There is that forceful dreaming woman, by Sebastian del Piombo, who has been taken for Raphael's Fornarina and who anticipates Prudhon. There are, besides, the two prodigious portraits by Angelo Bronzino, Lucrezia Panciatichi, the pale, patrician lady, as subtle as a Whistler in her pearly harmony, and her husband with his red-gold beard, whose cold and cruel expression explains the deep, restrained suffering in his wife's

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clear, sad look. There is Michelangelo's Holy Family, perhaps the only authentic easel-picture of his which we have, built up on great sculptural planes, and already giving a hint, in its solid modeling and its simplification of tones, of the heroes of the Sistine Chapel. And close to Luini, Perugino, Van Dyck, and Rubens there is Raphael, both the Raphael of the Madonna del Cardellino, still tender and shy, full of Umbrian grace, and the powerful Raphael strengthened by his study of Florentine art, of the portrait of Julius II. But it is within the four rooms of the Tuscan School that we find the true sanctuary, the heart of Florence in all its fiery purity. In the midst shines out Sandro Botticelli, the most moving of the Quattrocentisti, and, with Leonardo, the most mysterious magician of line. Here is the Birth of Venus, limpid and pearly as the soft light that wraps her round; here inimitable angels open their solemn eyes absorbed in contemplation of the Madonna; here the Calumny, composed after a text of Lucian's which described a work of Apelles, offers its extraordinary and harmonious complexities. Perhaps no one is more definitely inspired by the essential genius of Tuscany, no one sums up better that conception of art, than the painter of these pictures, where the transparent colouring of exquisite fineness is only a wash laid on over very firm design, and where severity melts into grace. And above all—oh! above all—what we learn in front of these marvels is the absurdity of the reputation for 'perversity' ascribed to

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Botticelli by a few decadent writers, who assuredly never come to the Uffizi. The man who has set the vigorous living form of this Venus against the background of a fairy sea, and filled with tumultuous breeze the rich stuffs which drape the proud nymph who is casting a mantle round the goddess—this man was as healthy as a Greek sculptor ! And as to finding perversity in the glances of the young archangels, the only place where it is to be found is in the minds of those who proclaim it, anxious to be original at any cost, even that of truth. Botticelli does not even possess the soft, gentle suavity of Fra Angelico, of Luca della Robbia, of Melozzo, or of Mino, that tender seeking for the charm of youthful flesh. He vigorously emphasizes snub noses and strong lips, and in the expressions of his angels it is impossible to discover anything but a grave melancholy, piercing yet dreamy : never an outline allowed to curve into prettiness, never an ambiguous expression in the drawing ; his easel-pictures keep the breadth and severity of the fresco. The man was like his art—loyal, upright, and honest, suffering passionately like Michelangelo from the terrible death of his friend and master, the Dominican Savonarola, dragging himself on crutches through the streets of enslaved Florence, growing old in sadness and neglect. In the Uffizi we feel shame and anger rise in us at the thought that the “ snobisme ” of some misguided lover of paradox has smirched so fine and pure a master with the reputation of a Sodoma or a



THE CONCERT (GIORGIONE)
1490

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Carlo Dolci, when he is, in his life and in his work, one of the last representatives of faith and strictness of morals, one of the last of the heroes, those whom we might call the Crusaders of the fresco, at the moment when Florence was losing her liberty and her republican virtue, and her artists were on the way to contamination through the vice and ostentation of a plutocrat bourgeoisie.

Unquestionably Botticelli was no more a pervert than any other of the masters who here surround him in a triumphant procession. For the rest, if this term, which the present day uses and abuses, had any definite meaning, there is no Florentine to whom it could rightly be applied. To find perversity, we must go to Rome, to the mannerists of the dreary Bolognese School, the deft, cold and insincere routine artists, the borrowers from Raphael and Michelangelo, the lackeys of the sham aristocracy built up on the shameless nepotism of Leo X, Paul IV, and Sixtus V, the elegant, sceptical, and vicious Cardinals who gave fat benefices to the servile painters who celebrated their merits in insipid allegories, or decorated their secret apartments with licentious paintings. Perversity? No, not even here: decomposition and degradation which spread its poison into France too when Catherine de' Medici, Concini, Mazarin introduced it among us, till the moment when Louis XIV made the fatal decision to humiliate and falsify the whole of French art by founding the School of Rome. In Florence they were all pure, proud, and poor! Look in these

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four rooms: you will find the finest sketch in the world—that Adoration of the Magi where Leonardo lets us see all the powers of his learned genius; the Bianca Capello of Bronzino, the double portrait of the Duke of Urbino and his wife by Piero della Francesca, religious scenes by Fra Bartolommeo, Piero di Cosimo, Albertinelli, Pollaiuolo, Rosselli, and Lorenzo di Credi, the delightful Madonna by Filippo Lippi, the tender colouring of Andrea del Sarto, the altar predella where Signorelli, one of the giants of fresco painting, curbs his energy, ambitious of larger surfaces. These are all fine compositions, fine examples of science applied to line and colour; but what grips us especially is the quality of feeling. It is this which seems to have been lost to-day, this sort of ingenuous clear-sightedness, the power to give a soul to concrete form, which these men had within them. Painting was to them what music has become for us—an ideological and emotional language. They copied nothing, they imitated nothing; they interpreted, and since they loved and observed Nature closely they only retained—using a great liberty and sureness of choice—those elements which were necessary for the manifestation of their idea. And they gave no thought to their individual glory; they did not trouble over that source of corruption to character, that pretext for vanity, artifice, insincerity, and neuroticism which we call fame. The work was everything and held in it the joy of the worker, his intense longing to complete it. What

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we take away from these rooms of the Uffizi is even more a moral than an æsthetic beauty ; here we are only in a museum, but in every place where we meet the Florentine Primitives we shall breathe again the appeasing and purifying air of a temple.

Lorenzo Monaco, the monk who trained Fra Angelico, has here the well-earned honour of giving his name to a special room. We find there his very fine Coronation of the Virgin, and also the still finer Madonna by his august pupil, with its choir of twelve angels, which sums up all the *soave* of Tuscan art, the predella where S. Peter preaches and S. Mark suffers, and the Magi adore. Botticelli, too, shows his genius for religious subjects in an Adoration hanging opposite his Birth of Venus ; and Lorenzo di Credi, Gentile da Fabriano, Ghirlandajo are there too—all the brave group of masters from whom it all came. May we call them painters ? We feel the need of another name. It is only the tools they used to translate their thought which relate them to the men who come after them ; copyists of reality, imitators of actual life whose great preoccupation is technique. These others were uncompromising idealists ; however much they offer us abstract joys, these never obscure the fundamental idea. Before these Tuscan Primitives it requires an effort on our part to attend to the painting ; it is the feeling they express which claims and holds us.

We feel this strongly as we pass on to the other rooms of the Uffizi where fine works of all the schools are collected. Venice exhibits here her

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magnificent sensuality in a few masterpieces : a Bellini thrilling with poetry, three grand portraits by Moroni, a Palma Vecchio, two splendid portraits by Tintoret and two of his religious scenes (Abraham's Sacrifice and the Wedding at Cana), where we can guess his sombre power ; the Titians, Giovanni delle Bande Nere, the portraits of the Duke and Duchess of Urbino, and above all his Flora, a radiant work of his youth inspired by Giorgione, all gold and pearl, a full-blown flower of fleshly beauty. Mantegna, harsh and detailed, has a triptych here, in which his pensive grandeur is fully revealed ; Masolino neighbours Correggio, and Veronese faces Parmegiano. In one room there is a group of fine and solid Dutch painters : Gerard Dow, Mieris, Netscher, Terburg, and Metsu. Two rooms do honour to Flanders and Germany, with Roger van der Weyden, a Rubens, Albrecht Dürer's marvellous portrait of his father and his two Madonnas, Gerard David, and Hugo van der Goes. Rubens exhibits his genial vigour, his Bacchanalian colouring, in two unfinished canvases crammed with furious life—the Henri IV at Troy and the Entry of Henry IV into Paris, which are among his greatest chromatic creations. Some charming portraits by Sir Peter Lely alone represent England ; and France has only a Bossuet by Rigaud, a Largillière, a Clouet, a Philippe de Champagne, and a Lancret—inadequate champions of her fame. All this is very fine painting, and our eyes and critical judgment tell us so ; but all of it, except the Van der Goes, seems cold and soulless



THE " FORNARINA " (RAPHAEL)
Pitti

THE MUSEUMS

if you place beside it one single Florentine Primitive.

Four rooms full of self-portraits by artists from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries, in which there are some very remarkable pieces, constitute one of the attractions of the Uffizi Museum, and it is an honour for a modern painter to be invited to take his place there. (Ingres, Corot, Puvis de Chavannes, Fantin-Latour, and Besnard among others are represented there.) We find two touching Rembrandts, Rubens, Van Dyck, Tintoret, Sodoma, Lippi, Veronese, Reynolds, Jordaens, Rigaud, and others besides ; and in spite of gaps and wrong attributions this series of painted autobiographies is of the greatest critical and historical interest. A cabinet of gems and cameos, a Medici collection, gives another aspect of Florentine art. Another room contains, among a number of Roman statues, the Hermaphrodite ; another, copies of the Niobe group by Scopas ; and, finally, three rooms conceal an inestimable treasure—forty thousand drawings by masters of all schools, but principally by fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italians, drawings which reveal all the detailed preparation through which the Primitives advanced from the study of Nature to her transfiguration. Five hundred thousand volumes and manuscripts and immense archives occupy the upper stories of this museum of the Uffizi, where the æsthetic glory of Florence is concentrated.

More limited, and less dazzling, the Accademia is perhaps still more valuable as a place of study

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for the evolution of the naturalistic ideals of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It stands in the Via Ricasoli, and was founded in 1783 in the ancient hospital of San Matteo. Fronting one at the entrance, under a dome which pours cold light upon it, stands the enormous and yet slender David by Michelangelo, carved from a clumsily cut block of marble, on which the genius of the young man recorded one of the grandest figures of collected energy that art has ever executed.

Till 1873 this heroic work stood in the open before the entrance to the Palazzo Vecchio, and it is deplorable that it should now be imprisoned in a museum ; it was made to be a symbol of the power of art and the strength of Florence, standing by the noble fortress. The contrast made by this white figure against the sombre, martial wall was one of the beauties of the City of the Lilies. Secluded here, the giant, in spite of the dome, seems captive and ill at ease : for antique statues are only at home under the blue sky. It is difficult to see the statue in profile. We can understand with what science Michelangelo, limited by the faulty shape of the block which had been given him to use, knew how to make its very defects serve to intensify the expression, bringing the arm up against the breast when there was no material to stretch it out, and finding a motive for this in the sling, which the two arms are to swing round. The mask, with its eyes full of terrible determination, and all its inexorable beauty, is already of the company gathered in the Sistine Chapel. A

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series of small marbles, casts, and copies all around recalls the history of the master's sculptured work. And suddenly we come upon the Primitives once more, and this time we come on them alone, without the contrast of other schools.

The miracle before us is the allegory of the Primavera by Botticelli, with its subtle symbolism, its celestial colour, and the adorable mystery of its woods of myrtle and orange trees, against whose dark background there stand, shadowy but firm, divine figures, a Mercury as beautiful as a S. Sebastian, the three Graces twined together in the loveliest interlacing of lines that a poet ever dreamt, the Primavera with her strange charm, the Venus surprised and troubled by Cupid who takes aim at her, and last the audacious Zephyr, so lively in his realism. To gaze at this work is to enter into one of the few supreme moments of art, to breathe an atmosphere of exaltation which perhaps only a symphony by Mozart can evoke in a like degree. And here, too, there is no trace of perversity, nor even of morbidity: the languor of the warm and flowery awakening earth does not affect in any expression or attitude the precision and dignity of the design.

Nothing in the Accademia—not even the altar predella, where Botticelli himself has painted the Resurrection, the Death and Vision of S. Augustine, and a curious Salome—attains to the beauty and the significance of this unique picture which closes the period of the Primitives and begins the Renaissance, and which, apart from its own proper poetic

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value, marks a fact and a date of the greatest critical interest. Still, we have here the most valiant of the "Crusaders." The Assumption of Perugino is, perhaps, his most completely representative work, and the Pieta gives the means of judging his youthful talent; by these two works we can judge it as a whole. The exquisite and living Filippo Lippi, the undisciplined monk, the lover and seducer of the nun Lucrezia Buti, is here in all his glory, with his Coronation of the Virgin, and the Virgin with Four Saints; another Perugino, a Jesus on the Mount of Olives startles one by the quite modern audacity of its colour harmonies. These are familiar masterpieces. But less well known to the public are an Albertinelli, a Fra Bartolommeo, a Filippino Lippi, a Lorenzetti, which reveal in these rooms of the Accademia their nobility and their beauty. We find there, too, the Adoration of the Magi, by that Gentile da Fabriano for whom Michelangelo, usually so hard on the Primitives, had a special veneration. The wholly sculptural art of Verrocchio asserts itself in the Baptism of Jesus, stiff, but learned; where a child with softly curling hair was perhaps painted by the young Leonardo in the studio of his master. Pesellino and Lorenzo di Credi again at the Accademia find a way to compel our admiration. Cimabue, Giotto, Agnolo Gaddi represent the first great effort of Italy; let us respectfully salute this art without which we could have had nothing of that which our heart and our eyes now and then prefer to it. Ghirlandajo here has all his prestige



THE MADONNA DELLA SEDIA (RAPHAEL)
Pitti

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as a master of technique and the teacher of Michelangelo. Last, a Pieta—the History of S. Cosmo and S. Damian—the eight pictures of the Life of Jesus, and the Last Judgment gather up into a radiant harmony of blue and rose and gold the paradisaical genius of the monk of Fiesole, of the Blessed Fra Angelico, beatified by painting before the Church decreed it—he who, of all the Florentines, was the least earthly and the most ecstatic.

This admirable art which is collected in the Uffizi and the Accademia existed before the over-famous, over-praised Renaissance. It penetrated further into the region of pure thought, and it ended without having been touched by the corruption and the shame of the Renaissance. To see it, study it, and love it is to understand the immense injustice committed by Papal Rome when she confiscated the art of Tuscany. But what other thoughts may not come to us if we remember the painting in our *salons*? While we there salute with giant adjectives a painter able to build up and paint a solid and expressive figure, here we find it a universal accomplishment, here perfection is a commonplace ; from the crown of the head to the heel every figure is an example of how easily difficulties may be overcome, an example of profound idealization of the visible truth. In spite of an unlimited choice of subjects, our painters seem not to know what to paint, and exercise their virtuosity on a few hackneyed themes, feasting us to repletion with the contemplation

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of so-called "studies," preparation for a composition which never follows. Here, artists were subject to an iron rule which would be unacceptable to us: for two centuries only one subject was allowed them, the illustration of sacred history. And, besides, above all in the first of the two centuries, the Papacy and the bishops confined the art of the painter to the representation of the Trinity, claiming a right of rigid control over the composition and even the gestures in the name of orthodoxy, whose obedient tool the painter must be. And yet these men enlarged, enriched, varied, and renewed this unique subject, overcame its abstract monotony, clustered round the dogma all the show of life, built up on this theme of three notes a whole vast symphony of psychic and chromatic shades, through the strength of faith and the grace of art, in spite of the rigid theological conception which they overflowed on every side. There is Florence's immortal poem, this freeing of the spirit by the very sincerity of faith, the flower of art springing from the root of dogma; and this art springs up like a great lily from the cloudy heart of the Middle Ages, a lily which, nourished by the blood of Jesus, is the very blazon of the City of the Red Lily.

And the last characteristic of this wonderful Florentine poem is the beauty of its forms. This burst of faith was not peculiar to Tuscany, nor did she alone feel it or glorify it; the French carvers of images, the pious folk of Flanders and of Germany were moved and uplifted by it at the same

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time, and with them, too, art took its birth from dogma. They had all the virtues except the virtue of beauty ; their art, sincere and expressive as it was, was ugly. They had no wish, they felt no need to make grace radiate from lovely faces ; it was enough for them that the feeling for the divine could be read on honest and simple ones. But Tuscany nourished a race as beautiful and supple as the exquisite lines of the mountains that shut them in. She has reconciled the beauty of form with the beauty of the soul ; she has identified them, and thus, rejecting ecclesiasticism, she has given to a dazzled world Greek eurythmy and the joy of the open air in the celebration of God's covenant. And nothing of all that came after—not the greatest prodigies of talent and knowledge—has been as beneficent or as purifying as this radiant fusion of the form and the soul.

CHAPTER VII

THE PALACE MUSEUMS

THE military and civic strength of Florence, the defences of the beauty of this Minerva who was also a Pallas, are concentrated in the formidable rectangle of tawny stone which lifts its tower at once strong and slender, 308 feet high from the outer circuit of its battlements.

It has taken three hundred years to complete this Old Palace in its present form. Arnolfo di Cambio began it in 1298; Vasari and Buontalenti added to it, working there till 1593. It was the palace of the Priors, the seat of the Republican Signoria, before it became the residence of the Grand Dukes under Cosimo I. Countless insurrections flung their surge and growling rage against the indestructible base of its walls. Here the Piagnoni, the Weepers, bewailed with Savonarola the imminent arrival of the Barbarians; here the rough Ciompi, the enemies of the nobles, ran barefoot, bearing torch and pike, crying, "Vengeance or liberty." Before these stones, gilded by the Tuscan sun, Savonarola was stifled in the flames, under the eyes of an ungrateful people, by the order of the horrible Alexander VI, the Borgia, vile wearer of the Papal tiara. From that



THE PALAZZO VECCHIO

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narrow balcony which juts out beneath an arch was proclaimed the result of the vote which gave Florence of her free choice in 1860 to Victor Emmanuel II, and nobly sealed the reunion of Tuscany with the reconstituted Kingdom of Italy. What heroic decisions, what tyrannical orders fell from the height of that balustrade where, at midday, the national flag is lifted up to float from its long staff, dislodging the birds who make their nests in the hollows of these venerable stones. At the foot of this rampart, quite close to the bronze tablet which bears witness to the execution of the martyred Dominican is the statue of the despot, the child of Giovanni delle Bande Nere, Cosimo I de' Medici. And at the north angle is the Marzocco, Donatello's lion, the Palladium of the city; the David of Michelangelo the Titan is missing, but the Hercules and Cacus of his ridiculous and hateful Zoilus, Baccio Bandinelli, the man who out of jealousy tore up the cartoon of the Pisan War, is there to bear witness to the decadence. Thus, round the martial mass of the Palazzo are grouped the symbols of the Past, and on its very walls we see the lily, the emblem of the city; the cross, emblem of the people; the eagle, emblem of the Guelphs, always hopeful that the German Emperor, who so often made his appearance from across the Alps, might bring Italy that unity which he never gave her; the balls, the "Palle," emblem of the banker Medici; and lastly, the red, the colour of Florence, and white, the colour of Fiesole, the Etruscan, the

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ancient Fæsulæ swallowed up by the city of the plain. What memories assail us here !

The Palace is in itself a museum of Florentine life ; it witnesses to that Republican Liberalism which has made Florence a Holy City of the spirit of man ; it shows us a warlike and democratic Florence, and contemplation of its simple planes and straight logical lines teaches us the same lesson of greatness as the contemplation of the pediment of a Greek temple. Nothing within it—the court of Michelozzo, the porphyry basin surmounted by the Boy with the Fish modelled by Verrocchio, the Hall of the Five Hundred, always open—can tell us anything to equal the lesson of the façade and the Piazza. In this vast hall our eyes, instead of dwelling on the honest paintings of the good Vasari, hunt for vanished traces of the two cartoons of Leonardo and Michelangelo, a sublime rivalry dissolved by a common extinction. The “ camera di Giovanni delle Bande Nere ” brings together the images of the lioness, Catherine Sforza, of the lion cub she bore, Giovanni, the being of iron corseletted with iron, killed, like Bayard, by a falcon-shot ; of the plaintive lamb, Maria Salviati, the forsaken mate of this fine, fierce creature ; and lastly, of their offspring, the cold and crafty Cosimo, the first Tuscan Grand Duke. Rich frescoes by Ghirlandajo glow from the walls of the Hall of the Clock. But the living history is all outside in the cry of the city, dominated by the belfry. Here one must live in the open air like the statues of the Loggia.

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The high arches of its portico are wide and open : Orcagna, they say, planned it, this Loggia dei Lanzi, whose name recalls the lansquenets posted here by Cosimo I, always ready to turn their halberds against the people, who submitted ill to bondage. Before being the guard-room of these reiters, an outrageous menace in the square sacred to ancient liberty, it was the Loggia dei Signori, and there in the presence of the people, and under the blue Tuscan sky, the solemn acts of public life were performed. The Loggia is now only a refuge for art. Cellini's Perseus guards it, the sword-bearer holding up the bloody severed head of the serpent-wreathed Medusa, while his winged feet trample on her body. It is powerful in the manner of Michelangelo and refined in the manner of Donatello, and time has caressed it with a glorious emerald patina. Against its pedestal, that marvel of goldsmiths' statuary, where exquisite statuettes nestle, the beggar, like the artist, sitting on a marble seat, may rest his back while the Italian sun warms his chest, for here the street is full of masterpieces, and there is no passer-by so vile as to allow them to be profaned by scribblings. Italian masterpieces are watched over by as many fierce guardians as there are men in Italy. The Perseus and the Piazza symbolize the supreme blossoming of Italian art. Beside the Cellini, and opposite the Uffizi Museum, the same legend transposed from Bible mythology finds its other expression in bronze : the Judith of Donatello. This formerly stood in front of the Palazzo Vecchio,

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having been set up there after the expulsion of the Medici; and it still bears the symbolic expression chosen by the Republicans: "*Salutis publicæ exemplum.*" Then Holophernes came back to life, and it was Judith who was conquered, and the old master's proud group made way for the David of Michelangelo. From under its arcade in the Loggia it looks on to the gate of the Palazzo, where it was once throned. Beside it are the Rape of the Sabines by Gian Bologna, the antique Menelaus and Patroclus, the Hercules and Nessus, also by Gian Bologna, and against the bare wall at the back, where the sun does not reach, five antique figures, among them that tragic Barbarian captive who bears with such an overwhelming pride the weight of his suffering.

The Palazzo and the Loggia harmonize through their very contrast: civic life behind enormous walls, art in the square, open to the sky. But all civic life is not in the Palazzo. Let us walk along the right side of its stony blocks, and passing the Palazzo Gondi, take a few steps along the Via del Proconsolo, and turn in through a low and sombre arch. Here, since 1260, the captain of the people, the Podestà, has taken his way. Insurrection, fire, Arno floods, all in their turn have vainly assaulted this dark entrance hall. Later on it heard the groans of prisoners, became the headquarters of the police, being known from this as the Bargello, a threatening name which is still borne by this Gothic palace. The Bargello, now, is merely a national museum. The first objects



THE LOGGIA DE' LANZI

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that we see in the cold light of the street level are pieces of armour, shields, wheel-lock guns, a bronze cannon, and those long Florentine swords, as elegant as they are strong, whose hilt is courtly, but whose blade is for battle. Then we come to the court, simple and severe in its fine fourteenth-century style, with massive arches and an ample and noble staircase of honour ; and what a delicious colour the stones are, and how much we are gripped by the past ! In a corner, musing, incomplete, and tragic, stands a Victory begun by Michelangelo. And suddenly we come on him, the extraordinary man, in his youthful works, Florentine works, his Drunken Bacchus, a Brutus, his wonderful bas-relief of the Holy Family, and various small marbles, looking at which we feel that Rodin is the only modern name we may speak without too much uneasiness. Here we may see the beginnings of this marvellous creator, patient, inflexible, ruling out self-expression and putting himself to the stern school of the antique. An interesting moment in his life, the recoil of the great wild beast before its spring, may be judged better in this hall of the Bargello than in any other place in Italy.

And on the first floor is a glorious gathering together of Donatello's work. S. George watches from his stone niche over all these bronze and plaster figures, the two SS. John the Baptist, the David, the Amorino and the Serpents, the Marzocco, the bust in painted terra-cotta of Niccolo da Uzzano, frightening in its excess of life. On

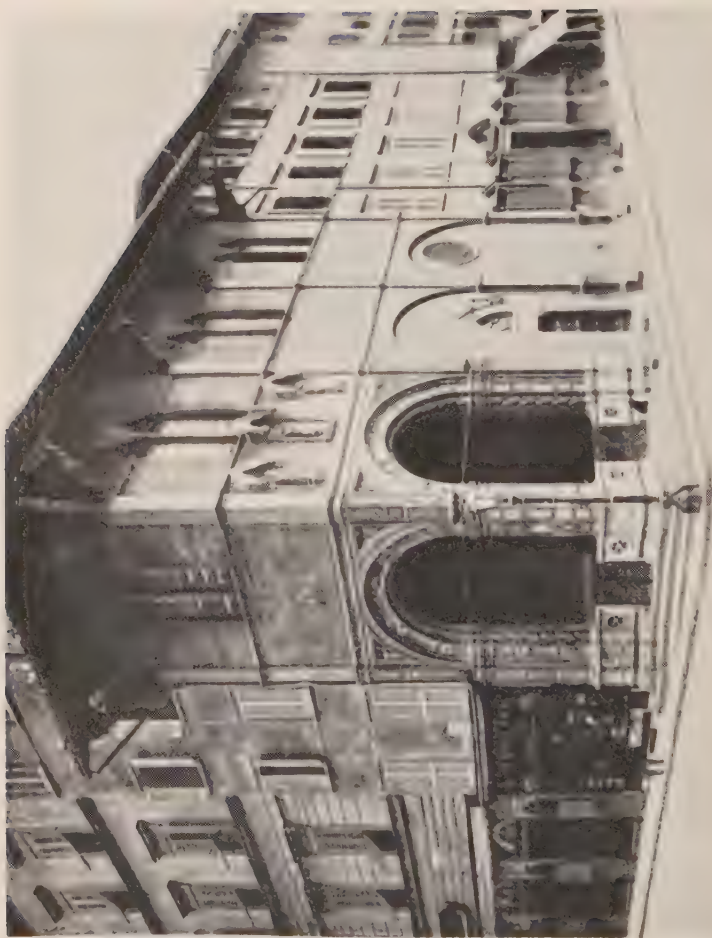
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his enormous horse, the old and crafty Gattamelata passes, fully armed, through the little people created by the genius. The series of rooms that follow gather riches of all sorts to set among the sculpture : tapestry, embroidery, enamels, ivories, majolica, church ornaments, niello, jewels, discoloured frescoes, shields with gorgeous chasing—all this seen in these noble old halls, with their cold light, gives us a dim luxurious whole. We are at the very heart of the city of art, faith, and dreams ; we are alive here with her in her intensest hour. Here is a reliquary by Ghiberti, a relief by Bertoldo, a Hercules overthrowing Antæus by Pollaiuolo, the David of Verrocchio, and those two Sacrifices of Abraham which were the competing works of Ghiberti and Brunelleschi when it was decided to add two more doors to the Baptistry, beside that of Andrea Pisano. Brunelleschi here is all movement and Ghiberti all harmony ; one easily notes the differences between these two great geniuses. Here is Cellini again with his bust of Cosimo I, his bas-relief of Perseus and Andromeda, the models in wax and bronze for his Perseus of the Loggia ; and he proves himself here as truly the last descendant of Donatello in the confusion of the sixteenth century. By his side the light and subtle Mercury of Gian Bologna is only a toy of sterile talent ; we pay homage to the technical ability of its author, and immediately forget it. Who could weigh a Gian Bologna—and far less any one of our modern exhibitors—against the adorable and delightful series of reliefs



PERSEUS (BENVENUTO CELLINI)
Loggia de' Lanzi

51-
COLUMBIA, N.Y.



THE PALACE MUSEUMS

in glazed terra-cotta by Luca, Andrea, and Giovanni della Robbia, which sparkle in all the rooms on the second floor, each of which is a masterpiece of science, grace, and sentiment? A whole group of fine and powerful sculptors exhibit their gifts on this floor of the Bargello as well as in the Accademia and better than at the Uffizi. Verrocchio, Michelozzo, Rossellino, Civitali, Mino, Benedetto da Maiano, Jacopo Sansovino, are the masters here, the glorious Argonauts to whom Donatello played Jason before Michelangelo. But none of them makes us forget these della Robbias, so sweet and so human. They are the smile of Florence and the sweetness of her soul, as they are the sweetness and the smile of this sombre feudal Bargello, the witness of so much tragic anguish. The Riccardi Palace contains still another of the tender things of proud and warlike Florence. Michelozzo built it for Cosimo the Elder, in rustic style, towards 1435; Lorenzo the Magnificent held his Court in it; Piero, Giovanni, and Giuliano were born there; Cosimo I lived there. It was not till 1659 that Ferdinand II sold this palace of his fathers to the Marquis Riccardi. This family added to it on the north. Buildings cover the spot where Lorenzaccio murdered Alessandro de' Medici, the first duke, a passage which kept the fierce name of the "traitor's way." Within this luxurious and crime-stained dwelling-place, which saw the pomp of Lorenzo and the cruelties of Cosimo I, and which heard the death-rattle of Alessandro as he bit the

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thumb of his pale assassin, there stands a chapel, and on its walls flowers one of the most exquisite dreams of Florence and of the world, the series of immortal frescoes by Benozzo Gozzoli, where, through a vast, luminous landscape of extraordinary decorative richness, the sumptuous procession of the Magi takes its way. Lorenzino, the neurasthenic rake, dreaming of the fate of Brutus, often stopped before this radiant work, the out-pouring of an innocent soul, before he went to fence with the hired assassin Scoronconcolo, or to flatter the duke he spied upon; and his puny ghost still strays around this chapel. . . . Here, too, there is food for meditation as we face the vision and the drama by which the Florentine soul was endlessly excited, and the work of Benozzo, like fresh flowers in this place of blood, bears its witness to an extraordinary moment in the history of art.

If you wish to plunge abruptly into the shades of the antique world and question the vestiges of a vanished civilization, you must go to the Palazzo della Crocetta. There, in the Etruscan Museum, the chilly odour of the tombs grips sense and thought, and you recover a few traces of the cities of that vast and mysterious empire which existed before Tuscany. Here are the Primitives who instructed uncouth Latium; the urns, jewels, armour, the tombs found at Vetulonia, at Volsinium, at Cortona, at Falerii, at Clusium, at Tuscania, at Fæsulæ. The black vases, the helmets, the candelabra, the tablets of lead on which are engraved

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PALAZZO GUADAGNI (SIMONE DEL POLLAIUOLO)
Piazza Santa Spirito and Via Mazetta

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an undecipherable language, stand beside the Greek and Roman statues and relics and a fine collection of mummies, sarcophagi, and ornaments from Egypt, as well as a series of Florentine tapestries made on the initiative of Cosimo I, which still bear the name of Arazzi, from French Arras, whose tapestry served in the beginning as a model to the world. The Etruscan Rooms of the Crocetta are undoubtedly the centre for any attempt to study the puzzling enigma of that great people the *Tusci*, the Pre-Tuscans whose proud ruins at Fiesole, equal to Assyrian or Pelasgic remains, speak to us of fierce strength, of a brave and conquering soul.

But on leaving these unfathomed shades what a joy it is to warm soul and senses again before a new series of masterpieces in the Pitti Palace, which is saturated with the Florence sun. We may reach it by the most lively and cheerful streets—the Ponte Vecchio and the Via Guicciardini, revelling with light and noise. We can reach it too by a more singular road, that narrow, straight, and interminable corridor which, starting from the Uffizi, goes along the Arno, passes over the Ponte Vecchio to the farther bank of the river, dominates the Boboli Gardens, and issues at last into the gallery of the Pitti.

It is once more the good Vasari who devised and built this fantastic corridor for the wedding of Francesco de' Medici. Narrow dormer windows dole out an uncertain pittance of light, and show glimpses of the Arno or the town. The walls are

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covered with prints and engravings before and after Marc-Antonio, views of Italian towns, portraits of the popes, cardinals, and nobles, with stern, crafty or cruel faces. These faces in the end obsess and disquiet the visitor, who for fifteen minutes progresses along this stifling corridor, climbs and descends a series of staircases and landings, and at last, tired and bewildered, comes out into those magnificent spacious golden halls full of sunlight which he had despaired of even reaching, like a man coming up through a trap-door into the light of a public square.

It was an enemy of the Medici who thought of this palace. Luca Pitti it was who, in 1440, commanded Luca Fancelli to build it from the plans of Brunelleschi, so as to eclipse the magnificence of his rivals; but the conspiracy of 1446 against Piero de' Medici failed, the pride of the Pitti was brought down, and eighty years later it was a Medici who completed the work—once more that Cosimo I, the man destined to absorb all the Republican past of Florence. A great grandson of Luca Pitti let the colossal unfinished building pass into the hands of the Duchess Eleonora, the wife of Cosimo. Ammanati first, then Parigi, decorated and enlarged its superb primitive bulk, made of blocks of rough-hewn stone, the only beauty sought for being in the proportions of the stories and the arrangement of the bays. This austere beauty, so different from that which the Middle Ages desired, may be well seen from the Piazza Pitti, whence the eye takes in the 672 feet

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of this façade, enormous, bare, almost sullen, like a barracks where several regiments might easily be quartered, but with such exact judgment of planes and masses that it impresses the mind with a sort of abstract contentment. Besides, this roughness, this bareness, are essential elements of beauty in the palace, to conceal up to the last moment two surprises—that of lovely gardens hidden behind the façade and that of the luxurious apartments, now transformed into a museum, scintillating with gold, marble, and masterpieces which this gigantic coffer of rugged stone hides like a collection of jewels; this apparent sobriety and severity covering an inner magnificence is again one of the symbolic marks of Florence.

The gallery of paintings in the Pitti holds about five hundred works of incomparable quality.

We culminate our visits to the museums of the City of the Red Lily here in a blaze of glory; our thoughts are filled with a feeling of triumph. In these rooms, enriched with frescoes, tables of porphyry or of mosaic, of jasper and lapis lazuli, of red granite and black marble, the pictures surpass metal and mineral in glory, and perhaps nowhere else do we get so complete a certainty that a picture is, above all, a decorative object of art, more suggestive than stuff or stone. Here Raphael is king, as Botticelli in the Uffizi or Michelangelo in the Accademia. He shows himself in all his Umbrian grace, shy, pure, infinitely moving by reason of his ideal sweetness. In spite of certain pieces which prove his power during the

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Roman period of his short life, it is in the works of his youth that he makes himself best loved, and that he is inimitable ; here his genius attains its most representative expression. His four Madonnas—the Madonna dell' Impannata, the Madonna della Sedia, the Madonna del Baldacchino, and the Madonna del Granduca—are like the four tempi of a sonata : they show how the combination of colours and lines can really attain to the signification of chamber music, to a sort of harmonic intimacy which makes us forget the plastic medium and leaves with the soul not a vision but a melody. This art belongs to none but Raphael ; whoever else tried it after him passed from sweetness to insipidity ; the imitation at once became a lamentable mixture of preciousity and platitude, for this divine young man kept, in the most elusive expression of his dream, a firmness and sobriety equal to Botticelli's, though with a less austere dignity, a sort of smooth and happy suppleness—the very rhythm of Mozart.

Whether he painted a Madonna or mundane figures like *La Velata* or *Angelo and Maddalena Doni*, his style always resists critical analysis ; it is subordinate to a native charm which is indefinable. Vigorous pieces like the *Julius II*, the *Leo X between two Cardinals* (that cruelly ironical psychological marvel) are by a great colourist and a great builder-up of forms ; they anticipate the high intelligence and skill of the Vatican fresco painter, but they are only paintings, and other men have equalled and sometimes surpassed

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them. But the Raphael of Umbria remains an isolated figure in the history of Art, unique, magical ; and one understands this better in the Pitti than in any other place in the world.

A master almost unknown to the crowd, and little noticed by critics, Fra Bartolommeo is perhaps, after Raphael, the painter whom the Pitti shows to best advantage : a Resurrection, a Holy Family, a S. Mark, above all a Pieta, which is one of the great Italian masterpieces, show he possesses the highest powers of composition and design and an intensity of religious sentiment which is magnified by the beauty of his forms. These four canvases will hold their own by the side of the most famous creations, and Florentine genius in its purest form is wholly revealed in them. Andrea del Sarto, too, shows gloriously here, full of life and nobility and illuminating everything he touches with a misty luminousness which relates him, before their day, to Correggio ; and the Venetians. Two portraits of a man and a woman declare the depth and psychological mastery of Moroni, and one solitary work, full and splendid, suffices to mark the place of Filippo Lippi, for this Madonna between S. Joachim and S. Anna is perhaps his most perfect work. And a single picture here is enough to testify to the genius of Giorgione : The Concert groups an Augustinian monk, a priest, and a young gentleman, all bathed and modelled in an amber gold, by the side of which the luminous quality of Titian himself pales, and which Rembrandt alone was

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to recover through the alchemy of his dreams, in his rainy Fatherland. What an unforgettable vision is the head of that Augustinian monk, massive as a bronze, brimmed with enthusiastic life, whose every feature seems to have been chased on molten metal. We may compare with him the fine Rubens pictures of which the Pitti is so proud—the Mars going forth to War, the Four Philosophers, the two golden-brown landscapes; we may compare the two figures by Rembrandt himself: Giorgione remains the most impressive of all. One of the most refined Van Dycks in existence is here: the Cardinal Bentivoglio, thin, elegant, well-bred, cunning, and debauched; the Ecclesiastic *par excellence*, the sceptic of the Papal Court, studied and revealed with infinite intelligence. Before such creations, so high a level of selection, we find ourselves neglecting a number of important canvases—portraits by Tintoret, paintings by Veronese, Bronzino, Murillo, Rosselli, Rosa, Boccaccino, Albertinelli, Sebastian del Piombo, Bassano, Lotto: all the paladins grouped around the princes. We almost fail to see the Entombment of Perugino, one of his best masterpieces. We do not collect our attention till we stand before the pictures of Titian. He shines forth in the Pitti Palace, almost as much as at Venice. He seems here even more skilful in psychology, and in the plenitude of plastic mastery. If the Venus of the Uffizi is his finest example of the nude, he has nowhere surpassed the Young Englishman, La Bella, the Ippolito de' Medici in Hungarian

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costume, the Magdalen, and above all that terrible portrait of Aretino which that depraved man himself, vile but clear-sighted, called "a hideous marvel," and which truly is so, an example of what the paint-brush of a genius can do to arrest the soul in the features of a man. The general impression left on one by the Pitti Palace, from the pictorial point of view, is very different from that made by the Uffizi or the Accademia. These two museums summarize as no others the art of Florence. One sees its birth and its growth, one may scrutinize its structure, analyse its intimate substance. Each work is in close communion with the city and the landscape which created it; they respond one to another without fail, and the effect on the visitor is a spiritual condition which makes him a sharer in the work and its fervour. Here we have only to admire a place of luxury to which the masterpieces are not native, and the beauty of Raphael or of Titian is the beauty which already conforms to what the moderns expect in painting; it is no longer that rare emanation of supernatural mysticism which is the peculiar quality of primitive art. The Pitti in its imposing bulk dominates Florence, but it remains outside her, and the corridor of Vasari is rightly made dark and lengthy, for it leads from one world to another, from faith to magnificence, from idealism to the indulgence of sense, from the concentration of the soul to the delight of the eyes; in fine, from concentrated meditation to the imitation of a Nature which the painters have deified. Titian is the Painter; we

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have but to think of Fra Angelico and we shall understand, without ceasing to admire them both, how much need we have for another word to describe the creations of the monk of Fiesole.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SANCTUARIES OF FLORENCE

FAITH, which created Florentine art, manifests its presence in the City of the Lily by a group of churches, each one of which is a stanza of a poem, a verse in a vast marble prayer. We have seen the jewels, here are their caskets ; there are as many jewels in these churches as in the museums and the palaces, and everywhere the fresco traces for us the symbols of Christian triumph, the divine ideas of Dante and of Francis of Assisi.

All this flowering of magnificence had its birth from the Baptistery. It is now overshadowed by the gigantic façade of the Duomo : beside that it seems only a delicate and modest building. But without the Baptistery the Duomo would not exist. It was the primitive cathedral, and it was its cupola which inspired Brunelleschi with his conception of the Duomo. This Baptistery is the sanctuary of S. John the Baptist ; Dante calls it, with a sigh of regret, “ Il mio bel San Giovanni.” It already stood here in the seventh century ; altered in 1200, it was only later on that it received its inner decoration of mosaic, from the hands of Fra Jacopo and Andrea Tafi, introduced into an entirely Romanesque octagonal

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building, with granite pilasters, gilded capitals, and double windows. The tragic Magdalen by Donatello stands close to the tomb of John XXIII, over whom the Virtues of Michelozzo keep watch. But the miracle is outside, since this Baptistery of many-coloured marbles is closed by the three immortal doors of Ghiberti and Andrea Pisano. They guard within them the essential thought of all Florentine art, the primitive prayer of the city, and under this cupola, whose proportions are so restrained yet so utterly pure, we may find again the dreams dreamed by the mystics of the twelfth century, when the city began to wake from the darkness of antiquity to the Middle Ages.

The enormous Duomo, on the other hand, is the perfect efflorescence of the faith of the Quattrocento; the colossal curve is its apogee. The Baptistery is the germ, the Duomo is the egg, repeating its shape on a vast scale; the primitive octagon has become the perfect sphere. S. Maria dei Fiori is the symbol of the whole evolution of the city, and the lily has given her its own lovely name. It was built on the site of the ancient S. Reparata to remedy the want of space in the Baptistery, which had become too small for the crowds of the faithful. In 1128, S. Reparata was already being used as the cathedral; in 1294 the building was resolved on; and Arnolfo di Cambio, then Giotto, then Andrea Pisano, had the direction of it from 1296 to 1349. It was enlarged again after 1357 and the great nave was designed by Talenti. The apses were only finished in 1421.



PALAZZO QUARATESI, THE COURTYARD (BRUNELLESCHI)



THE BAPTISTERY

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Brunelleschi took sixteen years—from 1418 to 1434—to build the dome. The work was not solemnly consecrated till 1436, and even after that the lantern was not added till 1462. Arnolfo's façade was demolished in 1588, and it was only in 1875 that the new façade was begun by Em. de Fabris. It was finished in 1887, and the bronze doors, whose skilful archaism supports without too much embarrassment the formidable juxtaposition of Ghiberti's doors on the opposite side of the square, were only finished in 1900. They were designed by Passaglia and Cassioli, and the best praise one can give to them, as well as to the façade of de Fabris, is that they do not offend the eye in any detail of their reconstitution. Thus the Duomo, within as well as without, is the image of the city perpetually at work, the Everlasting Hive. From the first moment of entering one is struck by the vastness and gloom of this sanctuary, where the choir is placed, not at the end, but under the dome, while round this choir, which alone is lighted, steals an eternal shadow. Behind the high altar the tremendous Pieta of Michelangelo stays, plunged in touching mystery, on the very spot where Giuliano de' Medici fell beneath Pazzi's dagger, opposite the sacristy where the wounded Lorenzo took refuge. But immediately on leaving the sunshine of the square outside, to penetrate into the cool, dark nave, the two first images to be observed, painted in grisaille above their tombs, are the two rugged equestrian effigies of the condottiere Hawkwood and the condottiere Nicola

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de Tolentino, the works of the old Uccello and of Andrea del Castagno, both alike superb and brutal. And between these three works all the Florentine past is inscribed. Here sleeps Brunelleschi, close to the busts of Giotto and Marsilio Ficino, the holy statues of Donatello and of Sansovino, the windows and the reliquaries of Ghiberti, the reliefs of Luca della Robbia, the chasings of Michelozzo, to many a masterpiece which decks, with a wholly intellectual magnificence, the severity of the cathedral, where no gilding testifies to the Catholic triumph. Art—the nobility of proportions—is here the only luxury instead of the offensive intentional display of wealth in so many other Italian churches, and we find nothing of the wearisome heaping of trinkets on Madonnas and insipid emblems of piety: here are barely a few flowers—nothing to injure the austere union of faith and artistic creation.

Close to the façade, with its many-coloured bands of marble, there rises, slender in its virgin whiteness, the tower which Giotto's sweet genius conceived, the sublime Shepherd's Tower. Gothic art, softened by the smile of Italy, has created nothing purer than this square campanile, which mounts upwards with the springing lines of a lily-stem straight into the blue sky, opening out, like a branching candlestick, its exquisite turrets bound with marble filigree. The whole work is a sculptured hymn which melts in the light and culminates high up in the blue with the joyous utterance of the bells. The very flame of faith



PARADISE (GHIBERTI)
East Door of the Baptistery

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shines from this immense taper, set beside the nave and the dome. Giotto dreamed it, designed it, and saw it begun before he died; Andrea Pisano and Talenti continued it, and in 1387, before the cupola was even planned, the Shepherd's Tower dominated the enormous mass of unfinished aisles and saluted the young light of the dawn on the summit of the Apennines. Along its sides are ranged perfect examples of the intimate union between architecture and sculpture—the S. John the Baptist, the David and the Jeremiah of Donatello, other statues which he made with his pupil Rosso, the bas-reliefs designed by Giotto and executed by Andrea Pisano, the compositions of Luca della Robbia, a veritable symphony on the mysteries of the number seven (Cardinal Virtues, Works of Mercy, Beatitudes, Sacraments). The walls of the Tower are also the leaves of a symbolic book, but there is more emotion for the soul in the mystic flight of one of the ogees designed by the Shepherd than in all these allegories of the gospel and the Church. The tower is the prayer of Florence, issuing from the shadow of the Duomo and openly offered up in simplicity to the sky.

Anyone who has known the Piazza S. Marco at Venice and then lingers on the Piazza of the Florentine Duomo will penetrate more easily the secret of the two civilizations, the contrast between the Byzantine spirit—sumptuous, subtle, and sensual—and the lucid pride of Western faith, than if he read all the tomes of history. Here there

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is nothing but order and beauty. The line is the setting of the spirit ; behind everything is an idea or a feeling, while in Venice all is sensation. Nowhere in the world is more clearly set out the conflict between the two conceptions which divide art. The *soave austero* is fused here with a latinity which is very sombre, very proud, and very severe, and everything speaks of civic loyalty and of religion. At one angle of the Piazza there still stands the old Oratory of the Misericordia, founded in 1326, whose brothers may still be seen in their black hoods with the two eyeholes. At another angle appears the delicious Loggia del Bigallo, whose pure Gothic elegance has since 1352 adorned with grace the Foundling Hospital ; frescoes, made in 1444, are dying, discoloured and crumbling, above its arcades, and in the interior Giotto and Daddi have adorned it with paintings, beside a Sodoma and some works by the followers of Giotto, pupils of Verrocchio and Lippi. At other angles of the Piazza still stand the Archbishop's Palace, the little old church of S. Salvatore, so touching in its simple Tuscan style, the house of the Canons, on the pediment of which Arnolfo di Cambio and Brunelleschi have their statues. Farther on a stone fastened to the wall is, as the story goes, that on which Dante loved to rest on summer evenings. And still farther on is the museum of the Duomo, which, in a silent court opposite the choir, holds a collection of Pisan reliefs, marqueterie, drawings, Byzantine miniatures, and two miracles

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—the silver altar of the Baptistery, decorated with figures by Michelozzo, Pollaiuolo, and Verrocchio, and the choristers' galleries created by the genius of Luca della Robbia, who never showed himself greater, and of Donatello, whose severity here relaxes into smiling grace. We are still in one of the most secret folds of the heart of Florence, and the vast Piazza is surrounded by churches which make a sacred girdle round it. S. Margherita, S. Maria Maggiore, S. Giovannino, S. Michele, S. Egidio, La Badia, S. Carlo, Or S. Michele—from these goes up the universal music of these holy and joyous bells which, as one comes down from the heights of Fiesole, proclaim a Florence still hidden behind the hills. This is the entrenched camp of the Tuscan faith.

S. Maria Novella is yet another of these citadels in the town of the Lilies.

On a vast piazza, where once of old raced the chariots between the two obelisks which served as goals, in the games founded by Cosimo I, there stands a marble façade, begun in 1278 by some Dominicans ; the interior of S. Maria Novella was completed by Talenti in 1350, and the exterior in 1470, from the designs of that Leon Battista who first imagined those simple yet ample volutes which unite the lower sides to the central nave, so sharp and sober in form, with its triangular pediment, its uniform marble ornamentation, its black and white vaults and its Gothic arcades ; a mass whose beauty lies in its proportions, according to the true Florentine principle, and charmingly

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contrasted with its campanile. The interior is no less noble and strictly planned, with its slender pillars, its vaulted Basilica, without ornament or mosaic, the clear, cold harmony of its stones ; it is the translation of a forest alley into Gothic art, when religion, still mindful of the secret ceremonies which persecution had made necessary, and also of those ancient mysteries performed in the depth of sacred woods, sought to hide the altar in the heart of a gigantic thicket, symbolized in stone by the image of a tree and its dome of leaves. Only later on, when the Church had triumphed, were the immense and gorgeous glass windows made, allowing the magic rays of the sunlight to be poured over the tabernacle, thus gloriously revealed to the multitude. The massive walls were pierced again and again by this irruption of light, and thus faith, at first fugitive and concealed in the shadows of the low and dark Basilica, took its flight towards the sun and the free air, with the great spire and its peal of bells, and made the cathedral a glorious symbol of itself. The primitive Romanesque crypt, gloomy and squat, still like a cavern in which the glimpses of the god were seen, stretched itself up on its pillars, rose and arched its height by bolder and yet bolder vaulting, and freeing itself from the weight of its buttresses, which riveted it to the soil and the pressure of surrounding houses, became in all its glorious body a surge of heavenly aspiration of which the cathedral spire was the topmost flame. At the same time the many-beamed light

...COLUMBIA, MO.



THE GREEN CLOISTER OF SANTA MARIA NOVELLA
The Spanish Chapel



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of the windows banished the ancient mystery of the Pagan's sacred wood, and instead of seeking the divinity in the depths of the woodland alley, represented by the pilasters and their interlacing branches on the vault, the believer was incited, by springing upright lines, to seek God on high.

The campanile, henceforth, could no longer be separated from the nave, but completed it, like the mast planted in the very bowels of the ship. Such was the symbolic growth of the architecture and of the faith which inspired it. S. Maria Novella is a perfect type of the intermediate period between Romanesque and flamboyant Gothic. It is Gothic of a humble and pure type, innocent of that wholly Pagan legacy of the dome which at S. Maria dei Fiori, and at S. Peter's of Rome, is a Roman reminiscence, intruding in Christian art. S. Maria Novella is the image of the Faith, at the moment of its grand flight towards its triumphant affirmation in the cathedral; and it is with these thoughts in our mind that we must see it and love it in order to understand it.

There, too, ornament conceals itself; the art of the fresco is the sole luxury for eye and thought. Immediately on entering we see the remains of a fresco by Masaccio, the only work, outside the immortal Brancacci Chapel, to tell us of his genius. In the right arm of the transept, in the Chapel of the Rucellai, an archaic Madonna dreams enthroned. And from her, stiff and severe as she is, all the marvels of the Uffizi, the Pitti—nay, of all Italy—

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were born; and we must pay her homage, for this is the Madonna of Cimabue which in 1280 was borne in procession because it was judged to be so beautiful; the first Italian picture, the first date in Italian art, the first sign of the artistic materialization of Christian belief! To the right of the choir the Chapel of Filippo Strozzi, the leader of the proud and unfortunate republican adversaries of the Medici, contains some delicious frescoes by Filippino Lippi; but the choir itself, only a few steps away from the Primitive Cimabue, the master of Giotto, contains the work conceived in the apogee of Florentine art by Leonardo's master, the frescoes painted two hundred and ten years later by Ghirlandajo, the Story of the Virgin, and that extraordinary Life of S. John the Baptist where the artist, wonderful in his grace and power, has assembled the portraits of the intellectual princes of his time. The whole splendid flowering of these two centuries is summarized there between the archaic effort and supreme refinement. On the left of the choir, the Gondi Chapel holds the Crucifix of Brunelleschi, and the right arm of this transept, full of masterpieces, contains the Chapel of the Strozzi family, where the great and lofty thoughts of Andrea Orcagna are shown in his paintings of the Last Judgment and Paradise. And from there we pass into the old cloister, whose arches, painted in fresco with terra verde, open on to a green grass-plot: there are the Flood and the Triumph of Noah by the old Uccello. There, finally, and

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crowning all, is the Spanish Chapel. This old chapter-house was assigned in 1566 to the Spaniards living in Florence, whence its name. But who can guess the names of those sublime Primitives who covered its high walls with a cloak of radiant frescoes? Was it Taddeo Gaddi? Was it Simone Martini, so long confused with his collaborator Memmi? Was it Andrea da Firenze? This anonymity baffles the questioning of criticism and of history, as does the Triumph of Death in the Campo Santo of Pisa. But what does it matter? All the doctrines of S. Thomas Aquinas are shown in allegory on these walls, where the world is animated by mystical thought; where saints and prophets cast heresiarchs to the ground, and the victory of faith is symbolized by a play on words and figures: those black and white dogs dispersing a band of wolves are the hounds of the Lord; the *domini canes*, the Dominicans pursuing the heretics; everything has a meaning, everything in this theological poem sets one musing over the depth or the ingenuousness of its manifold enigmas. But he who, careless of theology and orthodox mysticism, comes here in search of dream and beauty only, will see in this Spanish Chapel one of the sanctuaries of Primitive art, nothing but the joyous outbursts of a creative spirit in love alike with Nature and the ideal, escaping from dogma and aspiring towards life, towards expression, towards the beauty of forms, beneath the marvellous breath of Giotto's inspiration. No Eastern carpet is richer or more subtle in its

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variations, than these august walls of the " Green Cloister " of S. Maria Novella, the very simple and humble setting of one of the most tumultuous manifestations of human thought.

In Florence our devotion is addressed to the painters as to direct representatives of the Divinity ; its temples are also theirs. S. Maria Novella is the sanctuary of Cimabue, of Orcagna, of Ghirlandajo ; but S. Croce is the votive altar of Giotto, the New Sacristy that of Michelangelo, S. Marco that of Fra Angelico, the Annunziata and the Scalzo are those of Andrea del Sarto, and, finally, S. Maria del Carmine is the place where we must do honour to Masaccio. Such are the Holy Places of these saints of the Painted Thought. A church of the mendicant monks, it is in S. Croce that the finest Giotto in Florence may be seen ; Arnolfo di Cambio built it for the Franciscans, in 1294 ; a modern façade has defaced it. Within, it is plain and old-fashioned ; the beams of the roof show bare above the octagonal pillars of its three long, narrow aisles. Here is the theatrical monument which Vasari, a good pupil, but devoid of genius, desired to set up to the memory of his august master Michelangelo, whose ashes Rome has in keeping : here, in the same way, a cenotaph must atone for the absence of Dante's body, which Ravenna has always refused to give back to the tardy repentance of Florence ; here sleep Leonardo Bruni and Machiavelli, Alfieri and even Rossini and some of the Bonapartes, Cherubini, Alberti, and Galileo. A lovely marble pulpit

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proclaims the greatness of Benedetto da Maiano, and the della Robbia, Michelozzo, Mino da Fiesole, Rossellino have left exquisite works everywhere. But everything is eclipsed by Giotto. In these two chapels, Peruzzi and Bardi, he is at home, like a prince, surrounded by the noblest of his followers. The History of S. John the Baptist and S. John the Evangelist, the History of S. Francis of Assisi are two poems of such sweetness, richness of invention and purity of imagination as to move one in the silence of this old Basilica almost to tears. A Giotto cannot be described: it is all intention, sentiment, sincerity, spontaneous feeling; and yet in the stiffness of the forms, in the timid, fading colour, the future perfection and glory of Tuscany are all contained. These two simple chapels make one of the dearest places of spiritual repose that exists in the world. And round Giotto are Agnolo Gaddi, Margaritone, Taddeo Gaddi, Giotto, Giovanni da Milano, the devoted followers of the Shepherd. The chapel made by Michelozzo for Cosimo the Elder holds yet another of these miracles by Giotto, a Coronation of the Virgin, beside which even Fra Angelico's religion seems "literary." The fresco by Taddeo Gaddi in the neighbouring Giugni Chapel is almost as fine in emotion and style. Here, too, is the Crucifix by Donatello, which the master made to compete with that of Brunelleschi, in the Chapel of S. Maria Novella.

The cloisters of S. Croce are, one by Arnolfo di Cambio, who was the giant builder of so many

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Florentine monuments, and the other by Brunelleschi. The first adjoins that ravishing Pazzi Chapel, which Brunelleschi also built and which with its light arched vaulting, great central arcade, and its dome with panels of mosaic, anticipates the art of the Renaissance. Donatello has carved the pediment with heads of angels ; in the interior Taddeo Gaddi reveals himself again in a very beautiful Last Supper, and Ghirlandajo has the painting of a Christ. In spite of a ridiculous statue by Baccio Bandinelli, the court of Arnolfo's cloister, dominated by the slender campanile of S. Croce, still keeps its charm, religious without austerity, the subtle harmony of its golden-brown and rosy stones, and its dark velvety turf : to see the slow twilight falling upon it is a delight.

Quite close to S. Croce is the house of Michelangelo, the Casa Buonarroti, a gloomy and massive building, now a museum ; we may see there the Battle of the Centaurs and the Madonna della Scala, works of his studious youth, vibrating already with genius ; manuscripts, drawings, architectural sketches. One may linger here ; but the Titan's true home is the New Sacristy, that cold marble tomb where the Day and the Night, the Dawn and the Twilight, rest to all eternity ; there he has spoken out all his great soul, all the drama of his passionate life.

To visit the Annunziata is to make amends to Andrea del Sarto for the relative injustice done to his memory by the museums. In spite of certain charming pictures Andrea was, above all, a fresco

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painter ; and if in the museums he is lost in the brilliant procession of painters of the second rank, the wall of the Annunziata shows him to be a great colourist, and a profound mystic. Very old is this Annunziata of 1250 that Michelozzo enlarged two hundred years later : Andrea painted there from 1510 the Life of S. Filippo, the Adoration of the Magi, the Nativity, and a series of other compositions, wonderful in their clarity of colour and the majesty of the forms ; and in the outer cloister the noble Madonna del Sacco, so radiant in splendour, so sincere in religious feeling, is again by him. Here Cellini is buried. In order to know and reverence Andrea del Sarto as he deserves we must go further and see him in the Via Cavour, in the pretty cloister of the Scalzo. Here he has drawn the life of S. John the Baptist, in collaboration with Franciabigio ; he has used only a brown monochrome, yet once more he shows us that the great colourist is he who with only black and white can suggest colour by the power of the values, by the logical distribution of light.

Very poor, harsh, and stern is the façade of S. Maria del Carmine, a rugged and bare wall out of which opens the squat, unornamental door : It is there, in this unpolished tomb, half-destroyed by the fire of 1771, that the Brancacci Chapel, left unharmed, reveals the work which incorporated all the heritage of the fourteenth century, made possible that of the fifteenth, and served as a lesson to Signorelli and to Michelangelo, that Life of

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S. Peter by the poor consumptive Masaccio, who died at twenty-six, unrecognized, wretchedly poor, lost in his sublime dream. Masolino had entrusted him with the completion of the work, but it took another sixty years before Filippino Lippi came to finish the decoration which the young man of genius had undertaken, and which remains one of the great dates of the Florentine evolution, the most important since the discoveries of Giotto. Not till we come to Raphael, who copied in the Loggia of the Vatican the Adam and Eve driven from Paradise, which we see here painted by Masaccio, do we find so much expressive force, so much truth and grandeur.

The Church of S. Marco contains frescoes by Pietro Cavallini and a Madonna by Fra Bartolommeo ; but we forget them when, on entering the convent of S. Marco close at hand, we find ourselves in the presence of the frescoes of Fra Angelico. Here Savonarola preached, and, after his execution it was here that Fra Bartolommeo took the habit and retired to work and pray. Here lived the Blessed Monk of Fiesole. The tympana of the cloister arcades, the chapter-house, the corridors, the cells of this monastery, unique in the whole world, are decorated by him. Here we penetrate his genius most closely. Every wall in this humble and sublime dwelling speaks of him : we seem almost to come upon his shadow in one of these light galleries, which he decorated. His Crucifixion in the chapter-house is perhaps the most moving thing he has done, a pageant of wonderful

STEPHENS COLLEGE,
COLUMBIA, MD.



CHURCH OF SAN SPIRITO (BRUNELLESCHI)



CHURCH OF SAN LORENZO RECONSTRUCTED BY BRUNELLESCHI IN 1428

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magnificence and emotion ; but the visitor will muse longest, beguiled by the unspeakable charm of S. Marco, over the little scenes, like the Holy Women at the Sepulchre, or the Annunciation, which he will find in the cramped modest cells on the very spot where the great and fierce Dominican meditated his apostrophes to the Medici or the infamous Pope. Savonarola burned with fever and prophetic fury before these tender paradisial figures, painted by a saint whose soul held all the blue of Heaven. The believer rapt in ecstasy, the believer vowed to vengeance ; the blessed one and the martyr succeeded each other in these little rooms. What a world of memories and of contrasts ! And here, too, we hear the beating of the heart of Florence : the *soave austero* imposes itself on our minds and on our souls.

But where in the City of Lilies does it not ? At S. Maria Nuova, the hospital, founded in 1285 by the father of Dante's Beatrice, touches S. Egidio where we see a door by Ghiberti, closing a shrine by Rosellino. Or S. Michele—the ancient S. Michael of the Garden—contains Donatello's, Verrocchio's, Ghiberti's, and Orcagna's amazing shrine. The Badia of Arnolfo di Cambio holds two tombs by Mino, and the purest masterpiece by Filippino Lippi. In the convent of S. Apollonia the genius of Andrea del Castagno has set up, beside Dante's proud figure, men coated with armour, with weighty swords in their hands, Filippo Scolari, Farinata degli Uberti, worthy of his equestrian Niccolo in the Duomo. At

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S. Lorenzo, where Cosimo the Elder and Donatello rest beneath the same slab, Donatello and Verrocchio once more testify their power. At the Ognissanti, Ghirlandajo and Botticelli are added to Giotto and Duccio ; at S. Ambrogio, where Mino and Verrocchio are buried, the Procession of Corpus Christi by Cosimo Rosselli is a masterpiece. The old Romanesque Basilica of the SS. Apostoli holds a shrine by Giovanni della Robbia. If the old chapter-house of the Convent of S. Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi is to-day a police barracks, a lovely fresco by Perugino still remains there. S. Trinita is enriched with paintings by Lorenzo Monaco and by Baldovinetti, with splendid Ghirlandajos and an imposing monument by Luca della Robbia. S. Spirito, magnificent with its thirty-eight chapels, its three aisles, and its dome designed by Brunelleschi, is full of works by Donatello, Rosselli, Andrea Sansovino, and Filippino Lippi. So we see how in the sanctuaries art mingles with the Faith in its task of enlightenment ; and if the museums keep the atmosphere of the churches, every church is a museum where we may breathe in art. Mysticism and plastic beauty, indissolubly bound together, are but two aspects of the same devotion of the soul. We may pause anywhere to muse, to follow step by step the evolution of this art, so wonderfully moving and fruitful, and at every moment the work of a master strikes the eye. We touch it, we live with it, we are dazzled, but never weary. This art does not tire us like the crowded museums of the North : it

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accompanies us into the street, it is in the very being of the whole city, and each thing is so much in its right place, so absolutely destined for where it is, that in the end we find it natural to live among a succession of masterpieces. We are astonished that every door is not by Ghiberti, every door-knocker by Cellini, every staircase by Michelozzo. So, by gradual education our minds become attuned to the beautiful, and it is only when we have left Florence and come back into the modern world that, attacked and wounded by the shock of discords, we sadly understand what a point of unconscious nobility we had reached in Florence. It is like the sudden loss of inner light. Venice, when we leave her, leaves on our mind and on our senses the memory of a lovely dream, ardent and melancholy ; but we go back calmly to actual life, because it is impossible to exist healthily in the past. Venice is the past, the painted and embalmed body of a great courtesan of former days ; but no one can think of Florence as lovely, but dead. One feels that she lives for ever, that she is the ideal form of life, eternalized. One feels that all other sights are inferior to her, that nothing can be as pure, as absolutely realized in serene perfection, and that is why the regret with which we leave her surpasses in bitterness all other farewells. Here the soul is drawn closer to religion, and to the emotion of art, than in any other place in the world.

CHAPTER IX

THE FACES OF FLORENCE

THE men who created this vast pile of treasures, frescoes, statues, basilicas, naves and towers, altars and predellas, shrines and jewels, goldsmiths' work and ceramics, pictures and bas-reliefs, cloisters and campanili—these men, whose works are worth millions, if indeed they are not beyond price, set out in all the great museums of the world with the pomp and majesty due to princes of the intellect from the respect and adoration of the chosen—these men were poor and simple. An illusion, due to the lowering of artistic morality, permits us to think that they possessed secrets which are lost to-day, and when we pronounce those illustrious names which we see aureoled in magical glory removed from us in the distant glamour of five centuries, we imagine austere scholars, ecstatic mystics, or the magnificent Eastern kings of painting. But they had no secrets, and if our modern artists fail to come within measurable distance of them it is due, not to paucity of talent but to a loss of ideals, want of character, and an ignorance of methods.

These men gave themselves up wholly to their vocation, while modern life has debased the arts

COLUMBIA, MO.



CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA MADDALENA DEI PAZZI (BRUNELLESCHI)



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by a pretence of honour, by transforming them into "liberal careers," that is to say, by delivering them up to the terrible slavery of fashion—the picture dealer, the *salons*, State instruction and publicity—all the "privileges" imposed on the man who turns the disinterested exercise of his aspirations towards beauty into a profession by which to earn one's bread. These men despised money and ignored fame, living almost without communication with the neighbouring countries, without newspapers, without critics to flatter or solicit them, spared the temptations of profit or vanity which make the importance of a signature; they felt no need to hurry out of an apprenticeship which their religious and artistic faith made, in a double sense, a devout novitiate. Free, and without urgent needs, they escaped that fatal specialization which to-day condemns the man of one success to repeat his work and his method under the penalty of losing his public. They were used from youth on to embrace all the arts in one united and comprehensive method, to study architecture, sculpture, goldsmiths' work, painting, and even music or literature on parallel lines, as varied forms of one intellectual movement. Artisans, they were in love with illimitable perfection, scrupulous, on fire to waste no moment of time, for they toiled neither for ambition nor for money, but to sate their passion. Their souls were all love and sincerity. Their "secret" lay in this integrity of moral conditions. When we examine their works very closely we find that

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their results are reached by patience and fidelity of observation, by the good faith of honest workers, without any of those receipts invented by the men of the decadence, and which were far less proofs of science than means to deceive and to conceal the incapacity, idleness, and haste shown in contact with material difficulties. As to the exquisite idealism which underlies their creations, it needs no explanations—it is no secret that they had faith.

Let us picture these men to ourselves such as they were, not wrapped up in devotion, solemn, or ascetic, but good Tuscans, acute, mischievous, and gay, very independent of the priests who commissioned their work. Most of them came from the people, and their honoured names, which we pronounce with so much deference, were simple Christian names, accompanied by nicknames or professional designations. Giotto means Ambrogio, the little Ambrose ; Arnolfo “ di Cambio ” is the son of the money-changer ; Andrea del Castagno is a peasant ; the Pollaiuoli are the “ higglers ” or “ poulterers,” sellers of fowls ; Paolo the son of Dono is called Uccello, the bird, because he adores birds ; Andrea the son of Michele is called the Verrocchio because his first patron was a goldsmith ; Domenico is the son of a garland maker, from which he gets his name of Ghirlandajo ; Sebastiano is called “ del Piombo ” because he had been appointed guardian of the leaden seal of the Signoria ; another Andrea is a tailor’s son, and, owing to this, becomes for us

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the great Andrea del Sarto. Others are called after their birthplaces (the Perugino, the Parmegiano, etc.), or they are monks—Fra Giovanni da Fiesole, who becomes a saint—the Blessed angelic one, the Angelico ; Fra Bartolommeo, Fra Filippo Lippi. It matters little to them how they sign their pictures : it was not till much later that riches and titles were to tempt painters ; we are far from the time when the Pope of Rome will nominate Raphael a Cardinal, or Charles V make Titian a count palatine, or the later time when Rubens is an ambassador, Velasquez and Van Dyck Court painters. We have not even yet reached the moment when the minor princes, the Este, the Carrara, the Gonzaga will make the artists come to them and begin to uproot them from their native soil. Masaccio earned six sols a day at the most, and died without being able to pay his apprentice, having pawned his clothes. The life of Filippo Lippi is like an exciting novel. The orphan son of a butcher, received into a monastery, he is so idle, and so set on drawing, that he is handed over to a painter. He throws off his habit, is taken prisoner at Ancona by Turkish corsairs, is a slave in Barbary, then set free, and ends as a pensioner of Cosimo de' Medici. In order to force him to work Cosimo shuts him up. He escapes, and his patron only obtains masterpieces by allowing him to wander about at will. At Prato the nuns ingenuously trust him with the pretty nun Lucrezia Buti to serve as model for a Madonna ; he carries her off, and has

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a son by her, Filippino. The Pope Eugene IV treats the matter lightly, offers the rake a canonical dispensation so that he can marry, and dispenses him from his vows. But the monk refuses, "so that he might be able to live his own life," and remains impenitently a monk and the lover of Lucrezia, whose outraged family in the end it is said, had him poisoned. Botticelli loves to mystify us. It is very possible that Andrea del Castagno murdered a rival. These men are not yet tainted with the elegant corruption, the sceptical perversions of Cellini; but they are rough, bold, free, and gay, and if they enrich convents and churches for the love of Christ and the Virgin they willingly have a hit at popes and monks, and picture them freely in the "Hell" of their frescoes. Vasari shows them to us as good company, using a plebeian plain speaking; their superb art is this sincerity translated into action. They were completely and fundamentally true to their natures, whether licentious or mystical. Their first great sorrow was the death of Savonarola. They understood that his death made an end of Italian liberty, of the Republic, of the old noble company of believing hearts and minds. The saint, prophet, and martyr electrified them. At his word Botticelli, Bartolommeo, Lorenzo di Credi, a well-to-do burgher, burnt all their profane works. Bartolommeo was called Baccio della Porta, and had already worked at S. Maria Novella; he brought to Savonarola for the purifying flames all his studies of the nude. After the execution of the Dominican, Baccio,

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overcome with sorrow, took the Dominican habit, became Fra Bartolommeo, and for four years never touched a paint brush. Botticelli never recovered from the fearful death of Savonarola, any more than Michelangelo, whose sombre melancholy it increased. These men are citizens worthy of ancient Rome, proud, foolishly patriotic, and infinitely human in the avowal of their enthusiasms, as of their weaknesses ; they have neither the astuteness, nor the versatility, nor the perfidy which are called Italian, but which later on rightly apply to Venice and to Rome, the children of papal debauchery and of the saturnine crimes of the Ten of Venice—the dagger, the poison, or the nocturnal fall in the winding canal. These men are the aristocrats of the mind, the Liberals ; these are the Florentines.

And such as they were, such we find them to-day in their streets and surrounded by their models. The faces which Ghiberti modelled leaning out from the doors of the Baptistery, the children of Donatello and of Luca della Robbia, the women of Botticelli and Bronzino, we see them pass by. Their bodies are lovely with strength and suppleness, and easy and rhythmical movement of their limbs ; but their faces are not “ beautiful ” with that stupid and insipid beauty, a professional beauty, preached, in the name of a debased Hellenism, by the Academies. The passers in the street and the figures in the museums alike possess a beauty which is of the intelligence. I have already spoken of the irregularity, the heaviness of

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lineament in Botticelli's faces, where certain features are very delicate and fine, the brows lofty, full, radiant with idealism, the eyes, long and troubled, contrasting with the strong sensuality of the nose and mouth, and receive from these very contrasts and differences such an intense quality of characteristic expression. The degenerate school of Raphael did not know how to understand the æsthetic value of this irregularity, and its lineal rectification standardized types into mawkishness and insipidity. The Lombard, like the Piedmontese, is grave and weighty, the Roman is noble and pompous, the Venetian is precious, indolent, and a little morbid, and the Neapolitan turbulent to the point of irritating one by his meaningless agitation. But the subtle, significant faces of the Florentines are the faces of Italian Intelligence; we are in an Athens; and these people, courteous, deft, quietly alert, a little thoughtful, ready to observe, and ennobling with native grace their faintly ironical gift of realism, are indeed the same people as the geniuses of the fourteenth century. The children who enter S. Maria Novella or walk about before the Loggia you will find again sculptured long ago in the immortal "Cantorie" of Donatello and of Luca della Robbia. That old man who goes by, with his proud sombre face, might be the mysterious Uccello, whose life is a fine and sorrowful legend. He was a great painter of battles—the Louvre possesses a strangely powerful example—but in the furious entanglement of long lances with their red or

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black staves, what most attracted him was the play of geometrical lines relative to the moving figures ; for Paolo, a goldsmith and painter who had studied with Ghiberti and Domenico Veneziano, was above all things curious of geometry, and his friend Brunelleschi was harassed by him with questions on architecture. Uccello dreamed of a means of conveying perfectly the suggestion of the depth of vaults, or of perspective, in this art of painting which, on a plane surface, only deals with width and height. In search of this he would draw all night. He was very poor, and his wife furious at the great waste of oil would come to fetch him. But he refused to sleep, repeating, " If you knew what a charm there is in perspective ! " So he grew old, miserably poor, and attempted neither to sell nor even to produce anything, he who had painted the famous equestrian portrait in the Duomo of the condottiere Hawkwood. His obsession turned to madness ; he was the prototype of the absolute seeker. One day he invited Donatello to come to his bare and wretched home to see a work which he had finished after immense study. But when he had uncovered it Donatello turned pale and cried out, " Paolo, cover thy picture ! " and then went away without another word. Full of pity and terror he understood that Uccello had become mad, for there was nothing on the canvas but a multitude of concentric lines, where only the imagination of a stubborn seeker could see a combination of natural forms, Paolo was found one day dead on his pallet, and

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in the clenched hand of the grand old man, emaciated by fasting and want, was a little scrap of parchment covered with unintelligible lines. . . .

In the artless writings of Vasari we may get a glimpse of the strange story of these apostles, these heroes, these low-born saints who upheld the gospel of Giotto, and the Blessed One of Fiesole. Their life was so intense that it overflowed the limits of mortality. In truth, they are still here in the open places and the street; their bodily absence is no bar to their spiritual presence. Here, where Giotto walked with Dante, dreaming of the glorification of religion by a living art, here where Brunelleschi talked with Donatello, while pale Masolino and suffering, ill-clad Masaccio passed by, where Botticelli and Lorenzo di Credi followed by the young, fierce-tempered Buonarroti went together to hear the passionate preaching of Savonarola—why should the passers-by be more real than these immortals? And the crowd itself, the Ciompi, the Piagnoni, whom that terrible prophet stirred up, is always the same crowd that circulates, alert, lithe, and taciturn, in the maze of sombre lanes which come to an end in the Mercatoria, the Ponte Vecchio, the Signoria. At evening, in the warm twilight, in the stifling shadows of the arcades and of courts suddenly lit up by a last ray of sunshine, we see once more that people who so often rushed barefoot towards a riot, a fire, the noise of sudden tumult, or hid in panic from the pursuit of cavaliers burdened with their armour, embarrassed by their long

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lances in these inextricable *vicoli*, where the chargers could hardly pass. A Guelph populace, a friend of the Pope and of liberty, the enemy of the Ghibelline Imperialist who appealed to the despot beyond the mountains, an illogical and cruel populace, unjust, mad no doubt, but generous too, and prompt to repent, and light and gracious in its versatility, not evil like the Roman populace but bringing back memories of the rash and headstrong Athenian democracy.

The lovely scene in which there once lived these geniuses and a humble folk, equally inspired by a realism untouched by baseness and by passionate devotion to their city, high courage, and a calm, quiet pride : this scene has remained almost intact ; they might return to it without disaster.

The formidable bulk of the Palazzo still stands at the heart of the City of Lilies. The Ponte Vecchio keeps its old aspect of the fourteenth century ; Taddeo Gaddi made it, and he would notice only one change—the bust of Cellini, under the central arch. Its two sides are lined with shops, overhanging the slow green and yellow Arno ; they are painted pink and blue in a faded colouring exquisitely worn by sun and showers, and they are full of bright trifles, of sham trinkets, prettily designed, sold by slim, brown girls. Round the full trays press a crowd of curious people—tourists of all nations, painters with amused eyes, but, above all, Tuscan peasants come to buy their betrothal gifts. When night comes it all twinkles with little trembling lights, and

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through the middle of the noisy crowd come the homely wagons from S. Miniato with a great hubbub of bells and whips, at a fast trot. Even at night the old bridge retains its aspect of perpetual merry-making, in contrast to those wide, flagged quays of the Lungarno, cold, silent, and severe, where the tramontano blows so piercingly on bad days. Amerigo Vespucci, Corsini, Soderini, Guicciardini, Acciajoli, Torrigiani, Cellini, delle Grazie, Arquebusieri—all keep as they used their noble and simple style, and the old churches mark the sides of the river as it flows down to Pisa—S. Niccolo, S. Lucia dei Magnoli, S. Felicita, S. Jacopo, S. Frediano, S. Marie al Pignone on the left bank ; S. Trinita, S. Apostoli, S. Stefano, on the other, the churches of the poor, so impressive, all of them, in the middle of the old dilapidated houses touched to gold by the Tuscan sun.

And the palaces, too, remain. The Quaratesi, which was the home of the Pazzi and which Giulio da Maiano built after the designs of Brunelleschi, is a few yards away from the Bargello and the Palazzo Albizzi. The Strozzi, begun by Benedetto da Maiano, and carried on by Cronaca, lifts its military-looking architectural bulk of rugged stones, with very plain round windows and a fine Romanesque cornice ; except for the lanterns at the corners, the stands for torches, and the rings, there is no ornamentation of this dwelling-place of the proud Republicans, the unfortunate enemies of the Medici. But what a fresco may not our

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imagination paint against it by calling up the shades of the armed multitudes who so often flung their furious waves against the base of these impregnable walls ! The Palazzo Rucellai, by Alberti and Rossellino, is intact in the Vigna Nuova close by ; this, too, is rugged, and so is the Palazzo Spini. The faces of these palaces of the Liberal aristocracy are severe and warlike. They have known so many changes of the veering populace, rebellions, fierce dramas, public and private ; so often they have been hurriedly barricaded as the sound of the Ciompi's cries suddenly filled the air, while archers and crossbowmen ran to post themselves at the windows, and while, in the inner court, the master, sword in hand, helmeted, and in coat of mail, stood with his people round him ready for attack or defence, listening to the pealing tocsins and the roar of a maddened people ! To-day calm reigns, but the old indifferent stones bear witness to the ancient tumult.

It is true Florence has changed. When she became the capital of Italy it was necessary to extend and modernize the city, to break down a part of her ramparts in order to make room for new quarters on the right bank. Modern inventions had to be permitted : the electric tramway must pass the Bargello and the Duomo, and in place of the Mercato Vecchio there had to appear, cutting its way through the compact mass of historic ruins, the inevitable Piazza Vittorio-Emmanuele, without which, and a statue of

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Garibaldi, no Italian city can exist, any more—let us be just—than the smallest French town can do without its Place Carnot, Rue Thiers, or Boulevard Victor Hugo. But the Florentine Municipality committed no sacrilege, and preserved its sense of beauty ; on no essential point is ugliness, the payment we make for a dubious progress, visible or offensive. Nothing disgraces the face of Florence, and we can come out of the museums or the churches, and walk along the streets, the quays, the piazzas, still in a dream of beauty, never dreading the shock of some offence against the harmonious past. Nothing prevents us on the Piazza Signoria from watching the coming and going of the passers-by with the same eyes as the men of 1500 ; no outline has been changed. To sit on the marble seat, one's back leaning against the pedestal of the Perseus, to watch the slow declension of the sun, at the rosy hour, on the saffron walls of the Palazzo, is to overrule and eliminate Time. Here we do not have to suffer when we tear ourselves away from the works of art and the altars by our return to contemporary life ; we need not resign ourselves to leave a lovely city of the dead, and come out into a new and characterless place. Harmonious continuity binds the people of the streets to the people of the frescoes, and, respected by a modern world which slips furtively by the foot of its buildings, the town of long ago attests its impregnability.

She has not even, like Bruges or Nuremberg,
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amusing factitious archaisms, well maintained for the superficial pleasure of tourists; she has simply not changed: she is neither archaic nor new, she lives, she endures, she is at the same time fixed for ever and ready for the transformations of the future. She admits everything within her wonderful frame. Perhaps this faculty of absorption and conciliation is her unique, supreme characteristic. Her material body, like her genius, bears the mark of this. There is no break, no contrast; the elements everywhere unite through imperceptible shades, as in the creations of her painters, clamped by a firm, undulating contour such as outline Botticelli's figures. The church, with its frescoes and its miracles of metal work, is a museum; the museum has the dignity of a church. The street continues the noble lesson of the museum and the church, but all these museums are the living, smiling habitation of the race, and they are held in the clasp of Florence, herself a precious shrine in the heart of Tuscany. Art, history, religion, passion, all combine; and it is from this feeling that there is born in the mind of the sensitive traveller the idea that Florence is a living being, an organism of beauty; she contains all the mechanism of imperishable energy.

She has her walks, spacious and magnificent, each one of which has a special character. If, some evening, tired from gazing at too much beauty and longing for silence, we are in a mood for melancholy, we should take our walk in the Cascine, in that long park with the stately trees which,

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following the course of the Arno, extends into the country till it finds its further boundary in the lazy stream of the Mugnone. And there, at the far end, when we have passed the Piazzale del Re and its military music, passed even the mausoleum of the Rajah, long-ago cremated in this park which the Medici made, we shall find silence, and may meditate by the greenish water while the shadows deepen round. No one is here, in this spot from which we look out on the fringes of the countryside, the white villas, and the black yews against the flanks of the winding hills; we shall be witnesses of the night-fall, the intimates of the first star, and when, shivering a little, we turn slowly back again to the distant town, as we pass along the sleeping Lung' Arno our feet will tread the very flags trodden, before his exile, by the feet of Dante Alighieri.

On the other hand, it is when we glow with feelings of warmest gratitude, when we long to embrace in a single glance, in all its glory, this town whose every street suggests beauty, that we ought one clear morning to climb the joyous curves of the Viale dei Colli, to which the haughty Porta Romana opens its portico. It is wholly modern, this Viale; it was made in 1868, two years before Victor Emmanuel entered Rome, and it gives the measure of the taste of a respectful municipality, for among its roses, its plane trees, its oleanders, its flowery recesses, its delicious prodigality of blossom, worthy of the name of the City of Lilies, many a glimpse adroitly planned

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allows us to lean over the body of Florence the Fair to divine her pure and lovely outlines idealized in luminous haze, to taste one of those visions which most justify the joy of life. Here Florence reveals her face, her whole being, with the splendid simplicity of Botticelli's Venus, her feet upon shell-pearl, and the blue about her brow.

If, finally, we wish to understand how the somewhat haughty nobility and the temperate splendour of her art are closely bound up with Nature we must go one afternoon to the Boboli Gardens. We must leave for them the sullen exterior of the Pitti Palace and its furrowed prison walls which hold captive so many dazzling masterpieces. Cosimo I planned them in 1550, Buon-talenti and Gian Bologna completed them. Gian Bologna was the Le Nôtre of this Tuscan Versailles. He laid out the vast and shady avenues, majestic, decorative, frigid, where amongst the severity of the yew alleys, rusted to tones of bronze, there lives a company of statues. A grotto shelters four of the figures of Prisoners hewn in the rough by Michelangelo for the tomb of Julius II; the other two are in the Louvre. In the Amphitheatre the Court of the Grand Duke saw plays performed. The Giardino del Cavaliere is laid out on one of the bastions built by Michelangelo when he was a military engineer in the siege of 1530. The Vasca dell' Isolotto, with its flower-beds, its fountains, its colossal figure of Ocean and its pretty statues of river divinities, gives a just idea of the fine talent of Gian Bologna, ornamental

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and stately without being turgid ; and finally, from the Belvedere, Florence again shows herself entire, separated from us by the Arno. But, bringing a thought of sadness, far away towards Prato there stands the dusky mass of the citadel of Charles V, an image of dead liberty, of that servitude to the Empire which was imposed by Austria in the time of the Grand Dukes on the Republican Florence she had finally subjugated. . . .

How strange it feels when we have come down again into the town to ramble in the lovely evening, past the elegant shops of the Via Tornabuoni, across the brilliantly lit Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, to go in to hear the play at the Teatro Niccolini, or the Opera at the Pergola or the Verdi, a comedy at the Politeama, or a burlesque at the Alhambra ! Florence is alive, prosperous, happy. She is powerful, with her two hundred thousand inhabitants, her army corps, her archbishopric, her trade. She has kept the charming customs of the past : at Epiphany all the young people go gaily through the streets to the sound of trumpets and with waving torches ; on Ascension Day the whole town sets off at daybreak for the Cascine, to breakfast on the grass, to play, to buy—for it is *il giorno dei grilli*—crickets, shut up in little cages, each with its green leaf, which are hung from the windows at night for the pleasure of hearing the song of *il bellino cantor*. On May 23rd a quaint old picture of the execution of Savonarola is exhibited on the Piazza della Signoria, and the crowd brings armfuls of flowers to commemorate

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NEAR FIESOLE

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the death of the martyr, whose austere profile in bronze, let into the Palace wall before the Ammanati fountain, still contemplates the people for whom he vainly sacrificed his life four hundred and thirteen years ago.

Every festival is a pretext for hanging the Loggia with sumptuous tapestries, whose rich colouring shows up the beauty of the marbles and the bronzes. On June nights the fireworks and illuminations colour the white fronts of the villas and sprinkle the darkness of the valleys with momentary stars. On Holy Saturday four white oxen bring to the Piazza del Duomo, in front of the great doors, a car decked with fireworks. At midday, at the moment of the Gloria, a squib in the form of a dove, the *colombina*, is lit in the interior of the church, from flints which are supposed to have formed part of the Holy Sepulchre, and which, it is said, were brought here by Pazzo di Pazzi in 1209. Along a wire stretched right through the cathedral the bird of fire slips through to the outer air, where it sets light to the chariot. If this at once springs into flame, then the year's harvest will be a good one—at least according to the belief of thousands of peasants who have come from every Tuscan village, anxious and thrilling with excitement, to look at this *Scoppio del Carro*. The old popular aspect of Florence is revealed in all these junketings, on these days when the old streets echo the fine, sonorous voices of the young men, singing with Italian force and fullness late into the night. So, long ago, sang the children of

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the "Cantorie"; so sang the young Florentines of the Risorgimento when, after Solferino, after the departure of the Austrians, their agelong enemies, the whole of liberated Tuscany demanded in one great burst of enthusiasm to be united to the new kingdom—the kingdom which, after four mournful and tragic centuries was to realize Italy's dream of unity. Thus Florence links together her past and her present; thus she gathers all into her living harmony, victorious over time. While Rome is no more than the mummied corpse of a converted courtesan, offered to the cold curiosity of the learned rather than to the devotion of artists, Florence, the city of faith, uncorrupted and pure, may inscribe on the pediment of her buildings, "Come unto me. I am the truth and the Life."

CHAPTER X

THE TUSCAN COUNTRY AND THE SOUL OF FLORENCE

THE secret of Florence can never be completely revealed to the mind and soul of him who visits her until he has also visited her surroundings. The city is the figure of saint or hero, but the country round is as the frescoed background against which that figure glows ; and all Tuscany, with its valleys and its hills, is a fresco. The Primitives, portraying it, have not belied its features. Their wonderful power of fusing reality with a fine convention has married this noble, tender landscape with the images of princes and of deities.

Fiesole is the cradle of Florence. Throned on the rock, bare to the sky, she seems to keep guard over the city which succeeded her. The antique Fæsulæ was destroyed and absorbed by Florence as Alba Longa by the youthful Rome ; to-day their beauties mingle in glorious union. Let us go there by the road which passes by that Villa Palmieri where Boccaccio imagined the meeting of the youths and maidens of his Decameron, by that Villa Dante which once belonged to the Alighieri family and which, two hundred years later was transformed by the Portinari, kinsfolk

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of his Beatrice. Let us climb slowly up to S. Domenico and stop reverently before two sanctuaries. This modest hamlet holds the purest of the glories of Florence. One is the monastery where Fra Angelico lived before he made his permanent home in Florence at the Convent of S. Marco ; here he dreamed, as a young Dominican, of becoming the Giotto of his century, and this old dwelling witnessed his first attempts. The other sanctuary, close at hand, is the Badia, inhabited from 1028 by the Benedictines till the fifteenth century, when they were succeeded by the Augustinians in the enlarged buildings built by Cosimo the Elder. Within its crumbling and weather-beaten walls are enclosed the pure arches of a delicate façade. with finely chiselled ornamented marble. Innocent and immortal sanctuary ! Here the members of the Platonic Academy used to meet, here the astounding Pico della Mirandola worked, here Inghirami set up his workshops and produced his marvellous editions. If we go as far as the monastery garden we can, from its loggia, see Florence across the valley of the Mugnone, as Marsilio Ficino, Pico, or Bruno saw her of an evening, as they talked together of the antique genius which their own genius had raised up out of the darkness of history.

Thus the road to Fiesole, which binds the Tuscan efflorescence to its sombre Etruscan roots, is rich in lovely and august memories. Let us climb higher ; and if we take the new road we shall observe, among its black cypresses, the house

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where the Swiss artist Boecklin died, that Germanic Pre-Raphaelite who, like Rossetti, Millais, Hunt, and Madox Brown, was tormented by the craving for perfection, for pure Florentine idealism. Here it was he desired to grow old and die, in his chosen country, tired of attempting, like the geniuses he revered, a symbolic and formal art, in scorn of modern aberrations. He rests here in his mausoleum among the majestic funereal trees that he loved to paint. If we take the old road, the winding Vecchia Fiesolana, we shall pass along the wall of the Villa Medici, where Lorenzo the Magnificent loved to come and rest among his friends. The soul of Florence has followed us here.

And here, bathed in sunshine, is Fiesole and its great gateway, which bears the name of Mino da Fiesole, that exquisite, delicate artist, so many of whose works are in the city. Here is the very simple eleventh-century Romanesque cathedral, with its thirteenth-century campanile standing out against the blue of the sky and the hills. Leonardo Salutati sleeps here in a sarcophagus of Mino's; a Madonna of the school of Giotto watches over the altar. A Piero di Cosimo is in the Franciscan monastery, which stands on the site of the Roman Capitol of Fæsulæ. That is about all that the curious in art will find here. But Fiesole is a landscape in itself. Silence and light; some children in the deserted streets selling pretty trifles of plaited straw. One hears almost nothing. Sit on the worn flagstones of

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the antique theatre, or on the enormous stone blocks of the ruined Etruscan walls, and lose yourself in contemplation of the valley of the Mugnone, of Pratolino, of Monte Ceceri, of all that amphitheatre of golden and rosy stone to which the *soave austero* gives it severe beauty. From the terrace of S. Alessandro we see Florence lie open before us, dominated by Mont' Albano and the Apuan Alps; and if we can still make out the old Castello del Poggio, only a heap of ruins now marks the site of that castello of Pratolino where the Duke Francesco de' Medici once came to meet his lovely and romantic mistress, Bianca Capello, before he made her his wife. Quite in the other direction, going out through the Porta Romana on the highway to Siena, and leaving on the left the Viale dei Colli, a magnificent alley of cypresses leads us to the Villa Poggio Imperiale, and farther on we reach the Torre al Gallo, the fortified home of the Galli. Here Galileo lived and worked; and close by is the villa where, having become blind, he ended his unhappy but sublime existence among devoted friends, and received the visit of that other genius, John Milton, destined also to blindness but still able to see the grand landscape that lay before them. What did they say to each other, these two men, to whom the infinitudes of religion and the inner thought were equally clear? More fortunate than Galileo we can see from this spot all the Valley of the Arno, all the smooth chain of hills where the black of the cypresses makes the white villas look

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TORRE DEL GALLO WHERE GALILEO LIVED



PORTA ROMANA

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whiter. Yet a few more steps and we are at the so-called Villa of Lies, where Guicciardini worked, and where the surrender of 1530 was signed, which, through the treachery of Baglione, put a free Florence for ever under the yoke of the Medici, imposed on her by the Austrian Emperor. The place has kept the name given to it by the bitter indignation of the people.

It is by the Siena road too that we shall reach the Certosa of Val d'Ema, fair and gay among its olive trees and yews, with the cloisters which, perhaps, Orcagna planned, where the Acciaiuoli family are buried, beside pictures by the Giotteschi and a fine mural fragment by Albertinelli. And from the Certosa we see Florence once more, and the opposite heights of Fiesole, hazy in the serene light of this country, rosy with the rosy hues of Fra Angelico. From the top of Monte Oliveto, whose spur dominates the Arno, the Cascine, the whole town, we shall see her again as we look west, and again a little farther on from the terraces of the Villa Bellosguardo ; we shall see her from the south, from the monastery of S. Miniato, with its pretty church built by Cronaca, and admired by Michelangelo ; and once more when we have reached the Romanesque Basilica. This whole hill, fortified by Michelangelo, who directed from here the work of defence in 1530, was made a citadel by the order of Cosimo I. It is nobly dominated by the Basilica, with its three aisles, rich in marbles, in nielli, in its chapel by Michelozzo, its other chapel by Rossellino, its frescoes by Baldovinetti,

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its bas-reliefs by Luca della Robbia, its mosaics. Above all it is rich in its admirable and charming site, framed in gardens open to the sky.

And lastly, if we leave Florence by Sant' Ellero and Saltino to seek the freshness and silence of the oak woods of Pratomagno, and to visit the monastery of Vallombrosa founded a little after the year 1000 by S. Giovanni Gualberto, we shall notice, in spite of the distance and the capricious twisting of the roads which serpentine round the mountains, that the summit of Brunelleschi's dome is still visible from the rock, 3,400 feet high, called the Paradisino, from which the Tuscan scene seems all poetry. Florence claims our thoughts and memories at every turn among these mountains, whose living heart she is ; we divine her, we are conscious of her, we seek her behind rock or thicket, her beauty heralded by a blue haze, then suddenly disclosed. Her memories shine out into the distance, her genius and her vitality have strewn heroic memories over every fold of Tuscan earth ; it is through her that everything has a meaning, a name, a blossoming of memories, that everything is noble, infinitely noble. We must visit and love the Florentine country-side because its delicate yet firm contours, its transparent colouring, its pervading sense of style are the very elements of the fresco which she gave to the world, because this natural setting proves the harmony of her art. Merely by looking at her country we can perceive the materials which make the realism of Florence. She is born out of

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a vast cup of blue, like the Venus of Botticelli, resting her pearly feet on a shell of pearl; and this cup is crowned with flowers which in infinite profusion grace the mountains, with their fine, sharp outlines haloed by the light of a sky of periwinkle blue, tender as the eyes of Lippi's child angels, clear, brilliant as the majolica of Luca della Robbia. An adorable freshness of tones, an unfailing gracefulness in the rock-forms, deprives the scene of harshness without diminishing its grandeur. In the midst flows the green and yellow Arno, first a torrent, then a calm river, commanded by slopes which cultivation has made a mosaic of velvety squares, where the white, golden, or rose-coloured villa is neighboured by the slim campanile of a convent; and all this, with the sharp, contrasting note of black cypresses, leads on to the full symphony of the city. Behold her ruddy towers, her warlike gates; behold her domes and spires! Florence reveals herself entire, yet still mysterious, in her veil of opal mist, which the sun draws from the Arno. If there is a mystery in the shadows, there is also one in the light which reveals but idealizes and transfigures. The Shepherd's Tower shows pale and elegant beside the Duomo, which is like a ball of gold. The Signoria and S. Maria Novella have almost the colour of living flesh. The rest of the city is blurred in tones of grey and lilac, from which here and there a window sparkles. The groups of cypresses make a clot of blackness in the tender washes of milky haze which at once conceal and

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reveal Florence as transparent tissue proclaims the secret of the naked body which it hides.

Beyond the flowery plain and its mists, where the Arno bends before it rushes down to Pisa, flashing here and there in the sun, everything melts to purity and softness, becoming radiant and splendid as one lifts one's eyes to the mountain crests, where, lost in a mirage of reflected light, traces of snow shine like diamonds against the blue. From every side comes the sound of bells, and their tones seem to echo the magical tones of the clear sky. The lower notes mingle in a network of vibrations which spread themselves heavily through the air like a haze of heat ; the high notes keep distinct, sharp, like the glittering crests of a tree in flower, a miracle of sound within this miracle of light, a mighty hosanna within this canticle of white freshness ! One is left overpowered by so much splendour. . . .

If anything can be richer and more precious than so rare a collection of masterpieces, assuredly it is the contribution to the secret treasure of man's soul which comes from musing on the moral history of Florence. Time may in the end gain the ascendancy over all that the hand of man has created : the building crumbles, flakes fall from the fresco, the picture fades, our memories lose their truth and freshness, but that which the faith and genius of a race contributed to the whole world cannot perish, and the currents of universal thought will remain permanently influenced by it. We shall not fully understand or love Florence, we

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shall get no profit from her, if we visit her only because she is a lovely city, clean and healthy, surrounded by attractive scenery in Central Italy, with many fine monuments and celebrated works by great masters. If we conceive of her thus, we do not know her. It is her example that is important. What does it matter if we fail to see some great work, some flower in the garland of beauty? It is her example that speaks to the heart, it is this we must not lose.

Neither Rome nor Venice offers a parallel, nor perhaps any place in the world. Rome, the conjunction of the pagan world and Papal Christianity, is as cruel and polluted as she is great; and if Venice enchants and fevers our senses, her pride and lust leave in our minds a lesser emotion, for her makers were merchants, powerful and covetous, with no depth of faith or sustaining ideals. Florence is unique in Italy in the quality of her soul. She was the first to rouse herself from the shades of the terrible Dark Ages, from the desolation of barbarism sweeping down from the Alps, in order that she might rekindle the eternal light of the Saint. All at once she became the herald of the new era, and she absorbed Siena and Pisa, in order to set up in the north and centre of the peninsula an intellectual State, the nucleus of the future world. Her young genius appeared at the destined moment full-grown as soon as born. It was, indeed, the miraculous up-springing of a great lily, image of purity and noble form, after the chaos of brute force.

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If the providential fertility, the mysterious riches of the Tuscan soil had not put forth this flower, assuredly Italian art would not have existed in the form which has evoked the wonder of the world. Pisa and Siena might have revealed themselves in their two exquisite and limited schools ; but it is Florence who, by her imperious will, made possible first the centralization, and then the extension, of such provincial groupings. Neither Pisa by herself nor Siena by herself could have found sufficient strength or authority to give shape to the intellectual ardour and aspirations of the peninsula ; Siena, especially, isolated among the mountains and very conservative, could only have built in the heart of Umbria a little cloister of art. It is still more certain that, without Florentine influence, Venetian art could never have found itself, for this is the last-born of the schools, and the Venetian primitives, even the Bellinis and Cima, pay tribute to the Tuscan inspiration. As for Rome, she has never had an art of her own : it was the popes who invited the fresco-painters to come there, and up to the moment when Sixtus IV created the Sistine Chapel, tombs and mosaics were the only evidence of the survival of art in a city left almost desert and ruined by the Great Schism and the exile to Avignon. When Boniface VIII and Martin V wanted pictorial art to collaborate in the glory of their jubilees, it was to Giotto and to Fra Angelico that they turned, as, later on, Sixtus turned to Botticelli or Perugino. It was the methodical

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spoliation of Tuscany by a triumphant papacy which made the glory of Rome ; all the papal city did was to profit by Florentine achievements. The evolution of Italian plastic genius up to 1500 can be described without mentioning the name of Rome, and even literary forms were almost entirely created on the banks of the Arno. There, too, the forms of political life took final shape. That is the lesson of history and of criticism. The true capital of art is Florence ; Rome came later to corrupt her ideals.

The most striking feature of this ideal is a pure and exalted realism. In Florence, Christianity showed what spiritual nobility and moral honour could do towards renewing the æsthetic vision of the universe in the various spheres of human intelligence. It is here that it came in contact with the reality of life, an energetic, logical, and natural contact, which the world awaited, but which Byzantine ecclesiasticism, religion's first organ of expression, had refused to make, crystalizing instead into an exclusive, rigid, impermeable symbolism. The Gothic masters of Flanders, France, and later on of Germany, made also their great effort, but Florence added to their mysticism and their simple sincerity an element, unsuspected by them, which she discovered in the vast debris of Greco-Roman antiquity. This element is the beauty of form ; respect, curiosity, and love for beauty in created things ; the desire to wed the lovely rhythms of human movement with the manifestation of faith, to consider the grace of

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the creature as being one of the modes of devotion, its expression as one of the rites in the celebration of the divine. This idea is one of the pagan survivals which became a part of Christianity ; but while it was to lead Papal Rome to the shameless resurrection of paganism, and finally to provoke Lutheran fury against the corrupt city, with what tact and piety did Florentine realism feel its way to the gradual humanizing of dogma, linking it with the scenes of actual life, and presenting the story of the Cross as the most moving tragedy of man's history. From Giotto to Leonardo, from the scheme of salvation to the most learned interpretation of reality, the triumph of this wonderful Tuscan realism has been to avoid all reproach of a single offence against the Faith which directed its efforts. When the great insurrection of honest and brutal Lutherism flung the bands of Frondsberg and Bourbon lansquenets against the Sodom, the Gomorrah, the Babylon of the banks of the Tiber ; when art seemed about to perish utterly through the crimes of the Papacy, which, by corrupting it, gave a pretext to the iconoclasts, the city on the Arno, despoiled in her greatness, had a clear and unstained conscience ; the Medici alone were responsible for the vice and the crime they had imported, but her art chose to be silenced rather than be defiled.

Not even Athens in her palmyest days gave such an astonishing example to the world. No one contests the place of Athens as the supreme originator in the antique world ; and it is only in

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stubborn contradiction of the teaching of history that public opinion has made Rome the essential city of the Italian resurrection. She is only responsible for the Renaissance, that immense and fatal error. The moral benefit of the overpowering æsthetic influence of Italy in modern times was assured to us by Florence; it is Leonardo da Vinci, that supreme type of the sage, who formulated the spiritual law by which the new spirit lives. Florence is not only one of the loveliest memories of a vanished humanity, a memorial offered for our veneration—she is actually the maker of a mould into which all the currents of contemporary thought can flow. Rome was already morally dead when the ill-omened monarchs of whom Louis XIV was the worst, on the strength of the fame she had usurped, placed the creative imagination under her yoke and gave authority to that stillborn cult called Academicism. None of the misdeeds of that official art which has paralysed art's freedom in Europe for two hundred and fifty years can be imputed to Florence. If we explore Florence with a mind full of a timid and constrained respect for the deities of the schools, we shall feel at once how the schools have lied; for nothing is less academic than this city, where the finest masterpiece has no tincture of pedantry, where all is liberty and light. Nowhere shall we realize more intensely how the professors and the parasites have abused the authority of the great dead to impose respect for their dull formulas and empty accomplishment. Just so, a few years

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after leaving college and its dreary classes, having attained to manhood, having loved, experienced, and suffered, we rediscover Virgil, and that spontaneous poetry so profound, so entrancing, fills us with wonder and goes singing in our minds. Then we begin to understand how the dulled docility of boyhood, terrorized by the drudgery of examinations to be passed, bewildered and baffled by professorial minutiae, had merely stammered out the letter of this glorious spirit, and that everything had been done to disgust us with his works. There is no conception of painting, not even Impressionism, to which a knowledge of Florentine art will not give strength, logic, and sanity. Here is the indefinable fusion of realism and idealism, *an idea made visible in harmony*, that is to say, the reconciliation of every imaginable form of human art. If one can say that Christianity had been, wherever it penetrated, an ever-living seed-plot of freedom, that cannot be said without reservation of the Roman Papacy. The city of Giotto, Savonarola, Michelangelo has alone been Christian in the intangible sense of that word. No tyranny over the future has been the price of the admiration she has won and the spontaneous gratitude.

Pure beauty : such is the immortal lesson, such is the contribution of the City of the Red Lily to modern sensibility. She has reconciled the old antinomy of the real and the dream ; in her art the dream is the transposition of that reality which exists in our souls, and the more clearly

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art defines this reality the more does the dream assert its power within us. This dream is no disturbed and sensual sleep, no vague indolence of the soul, such as the periods of decadence conceived : it is the overflow of spiritual vitality to which the forms delineated yield their secret. There is nothing morbid in Florence, nothing indefinite, nothing languid or feverish ; the sane elevation of thought, man's trust in his power to idealize, the " gay science " of Nietzsche, the effortless and confident living of mere life : that is the treasure opened up to our consciousness in the City of the Lily. In Florence everything speaks to tell us, serenely, modestly, and firmly, what human consciousness can achieve when it knows how to love life without forgetting what lies beyond, without sacrificing either to the other, without yielding either to materialism or to mysticism. Florentine art, which never moralizes and seems to have no other aim than the subtle search for formal beauty, offers notwithstanding the most striking example of moral qualities being contained in the expression of beauty ; through this art the mind is braced, and all its vitality is turned towards nobler desires ; through its power we demand more of ourselves. . . .

A woman passionately loved performs this same miracle in the lover. Florence is a woman : not a virginal abstract type that stirs the heart like a Beatrice or a Laura, but still less Rome, the courtesan Rome of the strongly-moulded features, the low forehead, the fierce mistress of cardinals

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or of princes ; nor Venice, another Laïs of exciting perfumes, radiantly shameless in her sun-steeped Corinth : a woman of flesh and thought, who may be possessed, but by whose side the dream of pure, serene love would never be eclipsed by physical intoxication. Here, in Flaubert's immortal words, " Spirits, even as bodies, can embrace with ecstasy."

Florence is even spared the commonplace and insulting curiosity of tourists, who come to her for the sights alone ; those who go to Rome to gape at her magnificence and the vastness of her past, or to Venice for the excitement of sensual luxury, are here dominated by her religious and artistic faith, and are ennobled by her.

Florence is a woman, proud and reserved, standing on the threshold of her palaces, and her patrician frankness preserves all its grave and haughty grace. She is a woman with long, supple lines, a form full and yet slender, and her naked body is like the Lily itself, her emblem : not the white lily of the altars of the Virgin Mary, but the lily red with the purple wine of life. From the flowery heights of S. Miniato I saw one evening in the trembling haze that rose from her river the indescribable form of this Christian Athene, helmeted with her dome and the last ray of sunset burning on its golden crest.

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